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History Education and the School textbook in  
Fascist Italy: Fascist National Identity and  
Historiography in the *Libro unico di Stato*

by

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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## ABSTRACT

The Fascist government in Italy monopolised the textbook for primary schools in 1930. This act was the regime's bid to cultivate the *Italiano nuovo* and to transform Italy into a Fascist nation. By differentiating its education from the conventional contents and practices in Liberal Italy, the Fascist regime aimed at imbuing Italian children with a new national identity, which was expected to be a cornerstone of the Fascist Empire. History was regarded as one of the most crucial subjects for this goal and was high on the list of the regime's priorities when the state school textbook, the *Libro unico di Stato*, was written.

This research is a study of the historiography in the Fascist state textbook. Despite the importance of history education and the school textbook in the project to Fascistise Italy, few studies are entirely devoted to analysing Mussolini regime's view of history in the *Libro unico di Stato*. This thesis attempts to redress this gap. By analysing the *Libro unico*'s historical narrative –its messages, tropes, symbolism, thematic concerns, narrative strategies, languages, and periodization in all 9 volumes-, this thesis demonstrates what ideological messages and values were taught by Fascist schools via history textbooks, how the textbook narrative transmitted Fascism's world view and its historical interpretation to pupils, and what the characteristic of the Fascist historiography in education was.

In comparison, there are many studies about the Fascist presentation of history in visual culture (rituals, monuments, exhibitions, paintings, architecture and cinema) which illustrate that Fascism's use of history was not only a tool of propaganda but also an intricate combination of diverse motivations, existing ideas, well-established symbols, individual and governmental initiatives, conservative messages, and radically new styles and concepts. This thesis argues that the same is true in the narrative presentation of history. Through close reading of the *Libro unico*'s historiography, this research proposes that Fascism's presentation of history in literary culture also reflected various ideological proclivities, widely used rhetoric, metaphor and languages, commonplace topics, manipulations for propaganda purposes, academic debates, legacies of liberal historiographies, and Fascism's own view of history.

Ultimately, this thesis broadens our understanding of Fascism's use of history in the field of education and literary culture as part of its *bonifca umana* (human reclamation) project. The *Libro unico di Stato* is the medium that this study uses to investigate this subject.

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# Introduction

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The British educator and president of the Council for Basic Education in the United States, Arthur Graham Down once described the role and meaning of textbooks in public education saying that;

"Textbooks, for better or worse, dominate what students learned. They set the curriculum, and often the facts learned, in most subjects. For many students, textbooks are their first and sometimes only early exposure to books and to reading. The public regards textbooks as authoritative, accurate, and necessary. And teachers rely on them to organize lessons and structure subject matter."<sup>1</sup>

This is, however, true not only in Britain or the United States but also in most modern nation-states. Modern states produce their future citizens through schooling, with textbooks as the central instrument to teach presumably 'worthy' knowledge or moral-cultural values to students.<sup>2</sup> Italy is a particularly conspicuous example and intriguing case in this regard. In the early twentieth century, Italy was a new-born nation-state created just a few decades earlier and its political institutions and constitution, especially its monarchy and parliamentary democracy, suffered from the chronic problem of a lack of legitimacy as a result of a problematic unification process. In addition, the country urgently wanted to catch up with its advanced and imperial superpower neighbours. It was, therefore, important for Italy's ruling class to forge a solid national identity among the population and to quickly modernise the country. Such imperatives, albeit in a distorted way, converged on the Fascist movement through the experience of the Great War and jingoistic nationalism. So, in Fascist Italy, the emergence of the state school textbook was evidence of an explicit attempt to control the society's knowledge or values and to engineer its future towards a certain 'desired' form via public education. This

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Graham Down, 'Preface' in Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, *A Conspiracy of Good Intentions: America's Textbook Fiasco* (Washington D.C.: The Council for Basic Education, 1988), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. xv.

thesis is a study of the schoolbook produced by the Fascist regime; more precisely, the history textbook.

However, there were many school textbooks in Fascist Italy. Mussolini's regime introduced the Fascist state textbook, the so-called *Libro unico di Stato*, or *testo unico di Stato*, only in 1930. Before, various private publishers produced hundreds of different books which were used in schools all over Italy. Even after the introduction of the *Libro unico*, the Fascist government monopolised the textbook for primary schools only and textbook publishing for higher education remained a private market during the *Ventennio*. This study will entirely concentrate on investigating the part relating to history in the volumes of *Libro unico di Stato*. This does not mean that textbooks produced by private agencies were free from ideology or were unworthy to examine. Rather it is for a practical reason to limit primary sources to a more conspicuous and representative case. Why, then, does the state textbook, particularly its history section deserve to be analysed? The answer can be found in the process of the Fascist regime's introduction of the *Libro unico*.

Immediately after their seizure of power, Fascists began to control the content of all existing schoolbooks in the country. The Fascist government set up the Central Commission for Textbook Examination which, under the supervision of the Minister of Public Education, examined all existing schoolbooks in Italy and approved (or banned) them between 1923 and 1928.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the commission's work was to guarantee that every textbook contained 'adequate' historical information, political views, and moral lessons to instill the 'revived' consciousness of *Italianità* under Fascism into students, and to propose a good model for the 'new Italian' in Fascist Italy.<sup>4</sup> Yet, numerous reports and letters exchanged between the presidents of the commission, Ministers of Public Instruction, and Mussolini during the six years

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<sup>3</sup> Originally, the Fascist regime intended to organise the commission on a regional basis but had to set up the central commission as a temporary measure due to practical reasons. The original plan was never realised and the central commission did the job until the decision to introduce the state textbook was made. The central commission first consisted of seven members, including its president, which were chosen from officials, teachers, and experts of education. From 1927, one member selected by the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (ONB) was added; *Il libro per la scuola nel Ventennio fascista: la normativa sui libri di testo dalla riforma Gentile alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale (1923-1945)*, eds. by Anna Ascenzi and Roberto Sani (Macerata: Alfabetica, 2009), pp. 17-31; Alessandro Pes, 'Becoming imperialist: Italian colonies in Fascist textbooks for primary schools', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 18, 5 (2013), 599-614 (603-6).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

of the commission, reveal that the Fascist leadership was far from satisfied with the existing textbooks despite the publishers' constant revisions under pressure to meet the commission's standard. From the first year, the commission's official report complained about the insufficient quality of many textbooks in historical subjects. The third president of the commission (1926) Balbino Giuliano, for example, judged books under his inspection saying that;

"[they] often lack that deep love for Italy and that fervent worship of its [past] glories which must be carefully ingrained [...] in the souls of elementary school children [...]."<sup>5</sup>

Also Giuliano's successor Michele Romano expressed similar dissatisfaction particularly about history textbooks. He branded them as "not the product of a high and pure intelligence and a sincere faith [in *Italianità* and Fascism], but rather the expression of a new and no less abhorrent form of rhetoric".<sup>6</sup>

Such a grievance from the Fascist leadership derived from the fact that many (history or reading) textbooks ended their narratives in 1918 and therefore said nothing about the spiritual link between patriotism in the Great War and the Fascist 'Revolution'. For Fascists, who eagerly wanted to prove that Fascism was a historical heir of *Italianità* and the Risorgimento spirit, this omission seemed unbearable because the Great War was, they thought, a continuation of the Risorgimento and the starting point of their movement. Hence, the regime in January 1929 announced the introduction of the state textbook for primary schools, at the time the most basic and common form of public education in the country, abolishing all of the existing books from 1930.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore obvious that the Fascists wanted to implant a certain view of the past into

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<sup>5</sup> "[...] spesso manca quel sentimento vivo di amore dell'Italia e quel fervido culto delle sue glorie che bisogna aver cura di imprimere [...] negli animi dei fanciulli delle scuole elementari [...]."; 'Relazione della Commissione Ministeriale per l'esame dei libri di testo da adottarsi nelle scuole elementari e nei corsi integrativi d'avviamento professionale' in *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Bollettino Ufficiale*, 21 December 1926, I, n. 51, pp. 3210-11 (quoted in *Il libro per la scuola*, p. 25).

<sup>6</sup> "non il prodotto di un'alta e pura intelligenza e di una fede sincera ma l'espressione di una nuova e non meno detestabile forma di rettorica."; 'Relazione della Commissione Ministeriale per l'esame dei libri di testo da adottarsi nelle scuole elementari e nei corsi integrativi d'avviamento professionale' in *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Bollettino Ufficiale*, 4 October 1927, I, n. 40, pp. 3335-36 (quoted in *Il libro per la scuola*, pp. 25-6).

<sup>7</sup> *Il libro per la scuola*, pp. 27-28; Pes, 'Becoming imperialist', pp. 603-6.

public education and their discontent with the history teaching in the existing textbooks was a major motivation in driving the regime to monopolise textbook publishing. Now, the question is what this view of the past was and how it was told in the state textbook. These questions lie at the heart of this thesis which investigates Fascism's appropriation of history in the narrative of state school textbooks.

Arguably, several studies have already probed the use of history in Fascist Italy. They examined not only radio, newspapers, and the government's propaganda agencies but also various cultures, leisure activities and youth organisations under Fascism. As a result, they illustrated that Fascism's interpretation of history and its presentation was a powerful tool to exhibit the Fascist vision of the future and to mobilise the nation into the regime's totalitarian project: art, films, photographs, music, literature, exhibitions, museums, public ceremonies and monuments, popular festivals, folklore, architecture, urban planning, cityscapes, tourism, sports, academic institutions and research, archaeological excavations and so on. Thanks to these studies, we now know how Fascism used history in material-visual culture and the mass media much better than before, albeit still not enough. However, one crucial area to explore is still neglected; in order to grasp the whole picture of the Fascist view and appropriation of history, we also need to look into linguistic presentations of history, i.e., narrative historiography. Equally, if the Mass media and culture were mobilised for Fascistisation in the *Ventennio*, so was public education. Schools were a laboratory for the experiment to cultivate young Italians into the Fascist men or women and the regime's view of the past was one of the key subjects taught at school. Thus, this thesis will focus on analysing the *Libro unico di Stato* as its historiography was officially produced and disseminated by the Fascist regime. In other words, this study, by dissecting the narrative of history in the textbooks, will answer these questions: What was taught in history class at Fascist schools via school textbooks?, How were Fascism's worldview and its historical interpretation transmitted to pupils through the textbook narrative?, What were the characteristics of Fascist historiography and its use in education?, Was the Fascist textbook's historiography completely different from (or similar to) pre-existing Italian and foreign practices in the sense of language, symbolism, tropes, and political-moral messages?, If so, to what extent?

Though this dissertation is about Fascism's history schoolbooks, it is also, in a broad sense, partly a study of the Fascist presentation and use of history in political culture. Certainly, before this thesis there have been many studies of Fascism, which discuss the Fascist appropriation and interpretation of history. We need to briefly outline some of the significant academic

contributions. Yet, evaluating contributions of the existing literature is not meant to pay homage but rather to discern their limitations and to identify the gaps in the literature that this thesis attempts to redress.

One of the most discussed points in the study of Fascism's use of history in political culture or cultural politics is the regime's aspiration for modernisation. Many scholars of Fascist culture have paid close attention to the relationship between Fascism's intention to modernise Italy, albeit in their own way, and their public presentations of history. Ruth Ben-Ghiat's ground-breaking work illuminates that in the new age of the mass society, Fascism gave Italy an alternative model of modernity to pursue political hegemony, technological advancement, military dominance, economic prosperity and moral-spiritual regeneration of the nation by retaining social hierarchy and order. According to her, in this Fascist modernisation project, the concept of social engineering for regeneration (*bonifica*) was crucial to legitimise the regime's policy and to organise the mass consensus: various cultural products like novels, films, and festivals, whose themes were often from actually or presumably historical sources, played a central role in promulgating Fascist visions of modernity.<sup>8</sup> This dissertation shares the same argument but will attempt to prove it in the case of the Fascist school textbook: if the concept of national regeneration was central in Fascism's bid to gain legitimacy and consensus, it must be contained in educational materials as well. I would like to demonstrate this point in this thesis based on the idea that not only the popular cultural products but also history textbooks played an important role in propagating the Fascist vision of the past.

Focusing on more visual culture, Mabel Berezin similarly showed the close tie between the Fascist project of modernity and its cultural use of history. She demonstrated that Fascism's public rituals, ceremonies and spectacles, which were frequently themed with historical references, were choreographed to galvanise, among the participants and spectators, feelings of solidarity and a sense of belonging to the regenerated nation under Fascism. Yet to illustrate the emotional effect of Fascist spectacles does not necessarily mean that Fascist cultural politics is always irrational. Berezin on the contrary argues that Fascist culture is a rather more intricate mixture between rationality and non-rationality.<sup>9</sup> Fascism's discourse of history is a representative example to confirm this argument. The Fascist historical narrative consists of

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<sup>8</sup> Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Mabel Berezin, *Making the fascist self: the political culture of interwar Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

rational elements and non-rational elements in its arguments, rhetoric, motives, reasoning and premises. This thesis will show this in the case study of the *Libro unico*'s historiography.

There are other historians who examine the Fascist conception of modernity in line with its sense of [making] history. Through his investigation into the vast range of art, architecture, literature and films, Roger Griffin demonstrates how the deep rooted European and Italian fear of civilisational decline became an obsession with modernity, and how this desire for renewal provided Fascism with its powerful psychological and cultural posturing of "the sense of a new beginning".<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Claudio Fogu focuses on analysing Fascism's complex concept of time and history from which originated the Fascist self-confidence to make history; this sense of 'making (glorious) history present', he argues, was found in the regime's visual or ritual presentations of the past, like the diverse events to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Garibaldi's death in 1932.<sup>11</sup> I am convinced that the Fascist history textbook also encompasses this sense of 'making [a new] history' which will be verified in this thesis.

Another most discussed point in the study of Fascism's use of history is Fascist *Romanità*. Joshua Arthurs's book *Excavating Modernity* has asserted that in Fascist political culture, *Romanità* was not just empty rhetoric of pomposity for propaganda or a source of nostalgic atavism, but a core inspirational force for its vision of the future. To prove this, Arthurs not only explored the regime's visual representations of Roman history (i.e. exhibitions, monuments, and excavations of archaeological sites) but also convincingly analysed many Fascist intellectuals' lectures, speeches, essays, and the various activities of certain scholarly or cultural institutions in the study of antiquity. As a consequence, his book reveals that perceptions of Rome in Fascist Italy were interwoven by the conflation of forward-looking and backward-looking motivations, of rationality and emotionality, and of the regime's exigencies and individual initiatives.<sup>12</sup> Similar conflations can be found in the *Romanità* of the *Libro unico*. This study aims to demonstrate this point in the analysis of the Fascist textbook's Roman history.

All the studies cited so far pay particular attention to the link between Fascism's use of history in culture and its project to transform (modernise) Italy. Yet there are other studies on Fascism's

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<sup>10</sup> Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Claudio Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary: Politics of History in Fascist Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

appropriation of history which concentrate more on its association with nationalism or redefining national identity. Massimo Baioni's book *Risorgimento in Camicia Nera* approaches the Fascist use of history as the regime's effort to increase legitimacy by reasoning its origins and emergence in the development of national history. As such, Baioni focuses on the Risorgimento, the historical era in which the Italian nation-state was born, which became an inexhaustible source of discussion on nationhood, nationalism and patriotism in post-unification Italy. Ultimately, he proves how Fascism's will to reinterpret the Risorgimento history academically and politically affected Italy's historical institutions and their research by analysing diverse literary or verbal sources and using the reshuffle of a museum in the Fascist era as a case study.<sup>13</sup> Alberto Mario Banti is also engaged on the issue of Italian nationalism and Fascist presentations of the Risorgimento. Analysing various literature and written sources on patriotic topics in the Risorgimento and the Great War, Banti demonstrates that nationalistic narrative traditions from post-unification to Fascist Italy remained unchanged to a significant extent in their selection of historical topics, language, metaphor, rhetoric, messages and symbolism.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, his doubt about the radical difference between liberalism and Fascism in nationalist discourse made me wonder if there was really anything new in the Fascist narrative presentation of the Risorgimento.

It was not only *Romanità* or the Risorgimento that Fascism mobilised in its use/abuse of history. Medieval history and the Renaissance were also mobilised but this has only attracted the interest of a few historians so far. Medina Lasansky, for instance, recognised that the medieval-Renaissance past has always been a key component in the cultural or political discussion of nationhood and civic/national identity in modern Italy. As such, Lasansky chose to examine the Fascist era in which the identity politics of commemorating the nation's past reached a more intensive level than ever before. She explained how Mussolini's regime conceived, presented, and deployed the Middle Ages and Renaissance in urban redevelopment, architectural restoration, revival of traditional festivals, and popular leisure activities like cinema and heritage tourism in a bid to construct the Fascist national identity.<sup>15</sup> Based on the same argument, this dissertation will

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<sup>13</sup> Massimo Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia Nera: studi, istituzioni, musei nell'Italia fascista* (Turin: Carocci, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Alberto Mario Banti, *Sublime madre nostra: La nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Medina Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2004).

attempt to illustrate how Fascism appropriated Italy's medieval-Renaissance past in literary rather than visual culture with the case study of school textbooks.

All of the research reviewed above, from Ben-Ghiat's to Lasansky's, gave this thesis useful academic insights and information. Nevertheless, despite their achievements, there are still some gaps to redress in the study of Fascist use of history. First, none of these studies have examined the Fascist view of history diachronically. In other words, some like Arthurs focused on Fascist *Romanità*, others such as Baioni and Banti examined the Risorgimento, and others (e.g. Lasansky) investigated the use of medieval-Renaissance history, but none of them thoroughly examined Fascism's interpretation of history from ancient to modern. Secondly, many of these works concentrate on products of visual culture. Only Arthurs, Baioni, and Banti are engaged in analysing more linguistic (written or spoken) presentations of history in Fascist culture. Last, more importantly, all of these studies show no interest in the use of history in the domain of public education such as school textbooks and curriculums for history classes. Considering these three gaps, this thesis will be entirely committed to examining the Fascist history textbook which is a diachronic historiography in the narrative form, a representative material used in public education, and produced and acknowledged by the Fascist regime as its official interpretation of history.

It is of course clear that some scholars have already noticed the important role of public education in the Fascist bid to transform Italy and have studied schooling or political mobilisation of youth under Mussolini's government. Jürgen Charnitzky and Tracy Koon are probably the best examples. Their research is pioneering, tremendously informative and encyclopaedic for the study of Fascist education, but they do not analyse history schoolbooks seriously enough.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Koon's work especially overlooks the intricate nature of the Fascist textbook's historiographical narrative, regarding it as no more than a product of political propaganda.<sup>17</sup> However, I argue that Fascist appropriation of history was not merely driven by the political exigencies of propaganda. Fascists were also motivated by their conviction of Fascism's historical significance, its quintessential Italianness and, most of all, its historical destiny to transform Italy and lead the country to a bright future. This conviction was certainly resonant in

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<sup>16</sup> Jürgen Charnitzky, *Fascismo e Scuola: la politica scolastica del regime 1922-1943* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1996); Tracy Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy 1922-1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). Only Koon's work very briefly assesses the general tendency of the historiography taught in Fascist schoolbooks without a close-reading of the text.

<sup>17</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, pp. 82-83.



their discourses of history which will be demonstrated by this dissertation's analysis of the school textbook.

Although this thesis will explore the historiography in the *Libro unico* but it is not the first study to do so. A few studies which exclusively handle Fascist school textbooks have recently been published in Italy: Piergiovanni Genovesi's *Il manuale di storia in Italia*, Anna Ascenzi's *Education and the metamorphoses of citizenship in contemporary Italy*, Monica Galfré's *Il regime degli Editori*, and Ascenzi and Roberto Sani's *Il libro per la scuola nel Ventennio fascista*. By probing Italian primary school textbooks (history part) from the early twenties to the late forties, Genovesi's work aims to verify that the history taught in the schoolbook is, regardless of the political regime-changes, neither a rigorously objective historiography nor a totally falsified narrative of propaganda, but a combination of both.<sup>18</sup> Ascenzi's book may have a closer goal to mine. It elucidates the way in which history schoolbooks in twentieth-century Italy, from the dawn of the century to the early Republic, shaped particular concepts of nationhood and national identity in line with the change of the regime/ideology, and transmitted these concepts to the new generation of future citizens.<sup>19</sup> Galfré's brilliant research delves into how the Fascist regime's control over school textbooks, curricular, and educational materials affected or interacted with publishing industry, literary culture, editorial practices, and public education in Italy.<sup>20</sup> Ascenzi and Sani's study illustrates us political and administrative details (motivations, process and vicissitude) on the regime's control over the textbooks based on ministerial documents and legislative records.<sup>21</sup> So, these four books more directly provided specific and priceless information on school textbooks in the *Ventennio* for my research.

Yet there are still gaps to redress; they, like the studies on Fascist culture mentioned above, neither read nor break down the Fascist narrative historiography from ancient to modern. Diachronic reading can help us to see the Fascist interpretation and literary presentation of history from a longer perspective. To explore Fascism's interpretation of a specific historical period is a useful approach but is also problematic in diagnosing coherent or self-contradictory arguments, hypotheses, narrative structures, moral lessons, and ideological messages between

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<sup>18</sup> Piergiovanni Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia in Italia: Dal fascismo alla Repubblica* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Anna Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses of citizenship in contemporary Italy* (Macerata: eum, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Monica Galfré, *Il regime degli Editori: Libri, Scuola e Fascismo* (Rome: Laterza, 2005)

<sup>21</sup> *Il libro per la scuola*, ed. by Ascenzi and Sani.

the epochs. This thesis would like to detect such a coherence or incoherence by chronologically reading the *Libro unico di Stato's* historiography. In addition, despite very confusing and inconsistent changes over editions of the *Libro unico*, none of these studies give a complete picture and background bibliographic information of it; names of its all authors and illustrators (with biographic information of them), how long each edition was in use, how many different versions existed in editions, evolvments over editions (in content and physical appearance), characteristics of illustrations, cover designs, and page-layouts etc. Although these four studies partially provide such information, it is still insufficient to give us a tangible picture of how the Fascist textbook was. Hence, this thesis will attempt to fill this gap.

After the Second World War, two Cold-War conceptions dominated the interpretation of Fascism; one saw Fascism as a rather farcical version of totalitarian dictatorship and the other saw it as Western capitalism's metamorphic reaction to a crisis. Alongside these two perceptions (especially the former), many prominent anti-Fascists tried to negate the significance of culture in Fascist Italy and formed the conventional view of Fascism. So, for decades, the main stream intellectuals in the Western world underestimated cultural products in Fascist Italy as vacuous propaganda.<sup>22</sup> Norberto Bobbio, for example, famously said that "where there was Fascism there was no culture. There never was a Fascist culture."<sup>23</sup> Likewise, Benedetto Croce constantly dismissed any profound impact of Fascism on Italian politics and culture defining it as a 'parenthesis' in history.<sup>24</sup> Such a view of Fascism denied not only aesthetic values of Fascist culture but also any substantial connection between the liberal era and Fascist Italy in political culture. In other words, it negated any element of continuity in culture between the pre-Fascist Italy and the *Ventennio*. By the same token, many long regarded Fascist culture as only the product of the regime's intimidation or unilateral imposition. As a part of this culture, Fascist historiography and its representations were also treated in the same way. According to the conventional view, there was little or nothing to seriously warrant an inspection of Fascism's use of history because its historiography was mere propaganda unilaterally constructed and disseminated by the regime.

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<sup>22</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>23</sup> "[...] dove è stato il fascismo non c'è stata cultura. Non c'è mai stata una cultura fascista."; quoted in Marcello Veneziani, *Mussolini il politico* (Rome: Ciarrapico, 1981), p. 91.

<sup>24</sup> For Croce's 'parenthesis' of Fascism, see Paul Corner, 'Liberalism, Pre-Fascism, Fascism', in *Rethinking Italian Fascism: Capitalism, Populism and Culture*, ed. by Forgacs, David (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986), pp. 11-20.

Since the late 1980s' and early 1990s', however, academics have challenged this conventional view. As a result, many excellent studies on Fascist culture, like Ben-Ghiat's, Arthurs' and Baioni's, have been produced. As reviewed above, they have convinced us that Fascist culture, including its use of history, was a complex creation to display political propaganda, to reflect the regime's aspiration for a 'new' society, and to deploy pre-existing cultural movements and practices. Equally, these studies have demonstrated that political culture in Fascist Italy, again including the appropriation of history, was formed not by the top-down imposition but by interactions, collaborations, competitions and debates between the regime and individual intellectuals or scholars, between the party and private or public organisations, and between the government and the masses.

My aim in this thesis is to expose such a complexity within the Fascist use of history in education by analysing school textbooks. Although academic interest in Fascist education emerged before studies on Fascist culture, research on the Fascist historiography and its representations in the school textbooks is still very rare. Some recent works such as Genovesi's and Ascenzi's deal with the subject but their discussions are partial; none of them analyse Fascism's narrative history in the *Libro unico* at all three grades from the beginning to the end. If, as many cultural studies have proved, Fascism's use of history in culture was not a vacuous excess of words for propaganda but an outcome of combined aspirations, and if it was organised and carried out not only by the regime or the Fascist party officials but also by more complicated individual or popular initiatives and participations, the same may be true in the Fascist history education. By closely and diachronically reading the historiography in the school textbooks, this thesis is expected to elucidate the intricate nature and complex composition of the Fascist use of history in the field of education. It will eventually help us to better understand why, to some extent, Fascism appealed to the contemporary Italians.

To achieve this goal, this thesis is composed of five chapters in which I will analyse the content of history school textbook and clarify the role of history education and the textbook in Fascism's nation-state building. Chapter I will first discuss the relationship between formation of modern nation-states and the establishment of public education in a wider European perspective, to pinpoint why history became one of the most common and important subjects taught in modern day mass schooling. Then, reflecting this discussion into the Italian case, the chapter will move to describe achievements and failures of the liberal governments in public education, and the ideological-cultural conflicts over the historical interpretation in post-unification Italy which

eventually led to the emergence of Fascist historiography which attempted to read the nation's past in a different way.

Before analysing the *Libro unico's* history narrative, however, it would be helpful to understand how the Fascist state textbook looked like, how (by whom) it was made and circulated, what was the difference between it and its predecessors, how it evolved or changed over editions, and why such changes were made. Chapter II will be devoted to explain these largely based on bibliographic information and general characters of the *Libro unico's* history part.

Chapter III will explain how and to what extent Fascism differentiated its historiography and history education. For this purpose, this chapter will first articulate the Fascist project of *la bonifica umana*, to illustrate the new national identity and the future of Italy at which Fascism aimed. After that, it will examine the idiosyncrasy, plausibility, and limitations in the historical narrative that Fascism used in education by analysing its core elements, metaphors and connotations through comparisons with historical views of some influential Fascist intellectuals and parts of the school textbook's account.

If Fascism tried to forge a new national identity and the nationhood, one might ask to what extent it was radically different. In other words, if it is true that Fascism was not the first to appropriate history education in order to construct a 'desired' (from the regime's point of view) national identity, what was the difference between the Fascist use of history and other examples? To what extent can we evaluate the peculiarities of the Fascist case? This is the question that Chapter IV will answer. The chapter will start by categorising the concepts which define nationality into two: ethno-cultural perception and civic nationalist perception. And then it will apply this category to the Fascist (re)definition of nationhood. From this definition, we can identify peculiarities, similarities, differences, and influences of the existing notions in the Fascist idea of the nation, which will help us to understand better the characteristics of Fascism's historical narrative and its use in education.

The last chapter of this thesis will dissect the historical account contained within Fascist textbooks. By analysing the textbook account from ancient times to the twentieth century, it is expected to ascertain that the Fascist narrative of history is a complex creation in its messages, rhetorical devices, narrative strategy, tropes, ideological origins, symbolism, languages, metaphor, and selection of topics; some are Fascism's own inventions, others are opportunistic or thoughtful copies of the customary practices, and the remainders are ideological-practical revisions or adaptations.

Theoretically, this study will follow some widely accepted theories or hypotheses. For instance, Chapter I's discussion is based on generally agreed ideas about the relationship between modern nation-state building and the birth of public education, and about the influence of Romantic nationalism in Europe on the establishment of history as one of the most common subjects taught in modern public education. Chapter IV, too, employs a well established categorisation of nationalism and applies it to assessing the Fascist narrative of history. In terms of the theory of Fascism, this thesis is also willing to embrace the main ideas proposed by all studies mentioned above.

Methodologically, two different methods are partially adopted in this study. In Chapter III and IV, a comparative approach between either the textbook account and other narrative histories, or the schoolbook in Fascist Italy and its counterparts in other countries (Nazi Germany, Britain and Spain), is sometimes employed. This method will help to clarify the main arguments proposed by the text-based analysis. Meanwhile, Chapter V occasionally uses quantitative analysis to sort keywords in the textbook which means that I manually count the number of appearances of certain key terms in the whole history text and work out how often they emerged per page. It is true that nowadays more advanced ways of quantitative textual analysis are available thanks to digitalisation of many texts and the development of softwares for linguistic studies. Yet this is not adoptable to the *Libro unico's* case because all Fascist textbooks have not been digitalised yet. So, I had to depend on such a rudimentary method for the quantitative analysis. Though it is a time-consuming and primitive way, this kind of analysis will help us to more clearly see which moral ideological values were stressed in the Fascist textbooks and whether teaching of those values were enhanced or deducted over editions.

For last, I would like to clarify that this study will not directly delve into the governmental documents in archives. Rather this thesis will concentrate on analysing the Fascist schoolbook itself. It is not only because, as Galfré' has mentioned, materials and documents related on the Fascist history education are too scattered or hard to access and there is an existing study which already provides a lot of administrative documents and ministerial letters.<sup>25</sup> It is also because I am convinced that we can still find out many things about Fascism's history education and use of history by closely reading the *Libro unico's* text.

In 1938, the anti-Fascist exile and renowned historian Gaetano Salvemini, alarmed at the Fascist regime's abuse of history, wrote;

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<sup>25</sup> *I libro per la scuola*, ed. by Ascenzi and Sani.

"The winners [Fascists] are not satisfied with occupying the present. They project their victory into the past in order to extend it in the future."<sup>26</sup>

As Salvemini correctly warned, during the two decades of its rule, Mussolini's regime never ceased to appropriate history for political and ideological goals. It exploited various opportunities, channels, methods, mediums, and technologies to formulate and propagate its own view of history. Fascism's intention to use history and the sophisticated nature of its products cannot be more obvious than in the case of the school textbook. This thesis will be devoted to illuminating it by analysing Fascist historiography, from antiquity to the *Ventennio*, in all grades and editions of the *Libro unico di Stato*.

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<sup>26</sup> "I vincitori non si contentano di occupare il presente. Essi proiettano la loro vittoria nel passato per prolungarla nell'avvenire."; Gaetano Salvemini, 'Prefazione', in Carlo Rosselli, *Oggi in Spagna domani in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), p. 6 (First published in Paris, 1938).

# I. History Education and Modern Nation-State Building in Italy

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Italy has a great tradition in the political use of history. Long before its unification, numerous politicians, writers, and thinkers have used historical topics and metaphors for their political purposes. This tradition is not limited to politics and high culture. Today, lots of products in popular culture also interpret history and present it in the public arena. From the Parliament to a football stadium, from political rallies to TV programmes, from Niccolò Machiavelli to Giorgio Gaber,<sup>1</sup> history can be told and heard everywhere from anyone in the country. Strangely, however, the use of history in education, that is, history education, has been an underdeveloped area in the study of modern Italian history, which is strikingly more noticeable in the study of Fascism. Without any doubt, history education is one of the most trustworthy fields to observe the political use of history. Every modern state teaches history at schools in order to promote patriotism or the national identity, and in some way attempts to reflect its own view of history into history education. In this case, modern Italy is also a good historical example. Yet, before discussing the Italian case, we first have to ask: why is history and history education regarded as a useful tool for political aims in modern states? Why can this phenomenon be observed in every state but mostly in modern times? The answer lies in the process of modern nation-state building and its relationship with the formation of public education system.

## **Formation of modern states and the establishment of public education**

Mass schooling is a universal feature of modern society. All modern states have their own public education systems but, without exception, all these systems are commonly based on some form of schooling. So, it is undeniable that development of public education, which is characterised by school systems, and the process of modern state-building are closely related. The question is how and why they are related, which this part of the thesis will explain.

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<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Gaber (1939-2003) is a Milan born popular singer-songwriter. He is famous for many political songs which are sarcastic and critical. For a bibliographical account, refer to Massimo Emanuelli, *Il suo nome era Giorgio Gaber: storia del Signor G* (Milan: Greco & Greco, 2003).

Presumably we can anticipate that the same main causes which determined the characteristics of modern states also shaped the modern form of public education as well. When explaining the construction of current educational forms in modern states, some scholars place more emphasis on changes in the mode of production or in the economic structure, and others pay more attention to social aspects of modernisation. There are the others, even, who seek an explanation in the field of education itself regarding the internal politics of educational institutions and their evolution as important factors.<sup>2</sup> However, all of these theories cannot count against the hypothesis which assumes an inseparable correlation between the development of public schooling and the formation of a nation-state in modern times. Rather, they are partially or perfectly incorporated into the explanation on how state formation and the establishment of the public education system interacted.<sup>3</sup>

Modern public education systems were born in the age of absolutist monarchies at the same time as primitive modern nation-states. While competing with each other, European monarchies in the early modern ages aimed to be more efficient, stable and powerful. They developed royal courts into centralised bureaucracies, regulated taxation and revenue, and established standing armies. At this time royal courts or central governments became directly involved in education. Because specialised bureaucrats and professional military officers were needed, they funded universities and seminaries, or reorganised and sometimes established schools for secular education. In particular, many monarchs in the eighteenth century Enlightenment were aware of the usefulness and efficiency of education to cultivate the ruling classes into loyal and diligent subjects. As a result, they became interested in extending public education to younger children of the upper social strata, not just to provide administrative and military personnel for the state.<sup>4</sup>

However, in every sense, authentically modern forms of public education first came to life mostly in nineteenth century Europe as part of the creation of modern nation-states. Politically and ideologically, the aftermath of French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars triggered the formation of public schools in continental Europe. Again this was not only because governments desperately needed new bureaucrats and army officers to substitute for aristocrats and clergy in

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<sup>2</sup> Andy Green, *Education and State Formation: the Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 76. For more detail and criticism of these theories, see pp. 26–75.

<sup>3</sup> Green, *Education and State*, p. 77; Andy Green, 'Education and State formation in Europe and Asia', in *Citizenship Education and the Modern State*, ed. by Kerry Kennedy (London: Falmer Press, 1997), pp. 10–11.

<sup>4</sup> Green, *Education and State*, p. 79.



France or in newly created satellites states of France, but also because peoples' sense of nationality was rapidly shaped during these times; the experience of war and resistance against foreign invaders made European peoples conceptualise more linguistically, culturally and racially homogenised countries in their territorial boundaries as the ideal model of modern states. Therefore, it was required to educate the public with standardised methods and content in the process of modern state-building.<sup>5</sup>

Changes in the economic environment also contributed to the proliferation of public schools. Industrialisation, which began in Britain in the previous century became common in many parts of Western Europe during the nineteenth century and this transformed the economic structure of many European countries. The centre of manufacturing shifted from artisans' workshops to mass scale factory production, and the traditional channel of training skilled labours through artisan guilds or apprenticeships gave way to a more standardised and larger scale education system - public schooling. Moreover, with the development of industrial and financial capitalism, new kinds of professions emerged; bank clerks, stock brokers, accountants, property agents, journalists, various kinds of administrators or managers and so on. Qualifications for these jobs were more general and required secular skills or information with disciplined work ethics, rather than highly cultured knowledge or specific expertise. It was certain that the traditional education system, which largely relied on a few autonomous and voluntary institutions aimed at producing future social elites or specialised but few technicians, could not meet the vast economic demand for these new types of professions.<sup>6</sup>

The transformation of social structure during this century is worth mentioning as well. The influence and power of large land owners, title holders, courtiers and even monarchs had been waning. On the other hand, successful traders, owners of big manufacturing companies, bankers and financiers were forming a new hegemonic class the bourgeoisie. There were variations in

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<sup>5</sup> Green, *Education and State*, pp. 30-1, 79-80.

<sup>6</sup> Green, *Education and State*, pp. 40-41; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 29-35; Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1700-1870* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 9, 69; Edwin George West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Batsford, 1975), p. 256. Green in fact opposes the idea that mass education is a product of industrialisation saying it is doubtful that national education system could have directly and promptly responded to technical skill requirements of industrialisation. Yet he at least admits that 'education became more essential for the provision of new skills' in the second stage of the Industrial Revolution. Gellner, Sanderson, and West more willingly accept the effect of industrialisation in the formation of public education.

the formation of this new ruling class across Europe. For example, in Prussia, the landowning class of *junkers* still remained dominant in the midst of, and after, the rapid industrialisation of the country. However, Prussian *junkers* were no longer pre-modern aristocrats who monopolised political, administrative and economic power. Rather, they jointly composed a hegemonic block with the newly rising class of capitalists and industrialists.<sup>7</sup> To return to the point, it was quite noticeable that public education to some extent served the interests of the bourgeoisie or modern ruling class. Schooling supplied vast reserves of labour for employers by teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to the masses. Also, the new ruling class needed a new way to legitimate their rule. Innate social position or royal blood was no longer enough to claim the right and authority to rule. So, public schools supported the bourgeois state apparatus, which meant constitutional monarchies or republics, by inculcating people with patriotism and respect for order.<sup>8</sup> Thus, although it would be wrong to claim that the bourgeoisie deliberately pushed their governments into setting up a public education system, it is hardly unreasonable to admit the inter-relationship between the emergence of bourgeois hegemony and rapid diffusion of public schools in the development of modern states.

Lastly, the arrival of mass society was another factor in deciding modern forms of public education. This phenomenon was particularly visible in the latter decades of the nineteenth century when industrialisation, political revolutions and economic and social structural changes yielded mass production and mass consumption, an increasing urbanised population, the growth of the lower middle-class and working class, the birth of popular culture, and the expansion of suffrage. One might say that the advent of mass society is not a cause but an outcome of public schooling. But our concern is not to conclude which one was the cause, and which the effect, but instead what made the modern form of public education what it is now. In short, school education helped to construct a mass society by spreading literacy, promoting mass consumption of culture and giving people more chances to be employed. At the same time, the demands and conditions of modern mass society –the lower classes' hope of social elevation, a higher expectation of

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<sup>7</sup> David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 221–37; Jürgen Kocka, 'The European Pattern and the German Case', in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Jürgen Kocka (Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp. 3–39 (pp. 25–27).

<sup>8</sup> Green, *Education and State*, pp. 109 and 309; Stephen Heathorn, *For Home, Country, and Race: Constructing Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1880–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 3–5.

material life, a crowded urban living environment, the unprecedented mobility of people, standardised working conditions and a growing political identity- drove governments to establish more schools, to regulate them and to oversee the quality and contents of public education.<sup>9</sup>

So far, we have seen how the development of public education is related to the formation of modern states. More precisely, it is both a coherent part of the modern state-building process and an outcome of this process. As Andy Green points out, the establishment of the public education system must be understood in the process of modern nation-state building because all major factors which created modern states also interacted together, and characterised common features of public education in all modern states.<sup>10</sup> What then are the common features of the public education system in modern times? What do they look like? First of all, the basic and fundamental form of public education is schooling, which is heavily dependent upon governmental or municipal funding, bureaucratised management, hierarchic structure of schools, and compulsory attendance of all children at schools. The wide range of the state's intervention also marks public education in the modern world; recruitment and training of teachers, regulation of school administration, direct or indirect control over curricula, textbooks, the assessment of students and teaching methods. These are all common concerns of every government in educational affairs and are treated as important issues in public education though the extent is varied. If the establishment of public education is closely associated with the process of modern state-building, and its typical form -mass schooling- is an inseparable part of this process, how is this fact linked with history education? The following part will tackle this question.

### **Nationalism, history and modern public education**

Before discussing nationalism, the teaching of history and their relationship with modern public education, we need to examine what subjects or curricula have been, and still are, taught in schools. Today, in primary schooling -the most basic form of worldwide mass education and for a long time regarded as the minimum requirement of compulsory education- the most common subjects taught are (national) language and literature, arithmetic and history. As reading, writing and calculating are basic skills for enabling modern-day social, economic and cultural life, it is understandable that (national) language and arithmetic became major subjects in elementary

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<sup>9</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Green, 'Education and State formation in Europe', pp. 10-11.

education.<sup>11</sup> The incorporation of history into the curriculum, however, has more complex historical, cultural and political implications. By and large, there are two pedagogical and ideological currents in the nineteenth century that can be identified as the main contributors to making history an important subject: the idea which conceives education (and schooling) as a medium of 'socialisation', and nationalism. The former is the idea that individual children can and ought to be instructed as desirable members of the society in terms of not only obtaining necessary skills and knowledge but also learning socially acceptable ideas, culture, morals and behaviours through the experience of schooling.<sup>12</sup> How then do modern states cultivate children into desirable members of the society? What methods or materials can be used to teach them? The latter, nationalism, was the solution adopted in modern schooling to resolve this question.

The offspring of the modern age, the nation-state and public education have another sister, that is, nationalism. There is an ongoing controversy between scholars over the origins of nationalism, but this debate is about whether national identity can be defined, or whether the consciousness of nationhood existed in the pre-modern times, rather than about whether nationalism is a product of modernity or not.<sup>13</sup> When we therefore define nationalism as 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential "nation"',<sup>14</sup> it is without doubt a modern political, ideological and cultural phenomenon.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 32–35.

<sup>12</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, pp. 4–5. Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith made a similar statement on the role of school textbooks. See Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith, 'The Politics of the Textbook' in *The Politics of the Textbook*, ed. by Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Scholars are on the whole divided into two groups over this issue. The first group is the modernists who argue that nationalism (including the consciousness of nationhood) is a product of modernity. Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and John Breuilly etc. champion this stance. The other is categorised as the perennialist or primordialist. They contend that nationalism did not emerge from scratch in modern eras and its primitive forms can be found in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Adrian Hastings, Anthony Smith and Liah Greenfield belong to this group. For more details of this categorisation, see Colin Kidd, 'Identity before Identities: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Historian', in *History and Nation*, ed. by Julia Rudolph, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006), pp. 11–12.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Stefan Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe', in *Writing the Nation: A Global perspective*, ed. by Stefan Berger (London: Palgrave

At this point, more concern should be given to the 'cultural' aspect of nationalism, not only because it could not have been such a successful and widely disseminated political idea in the modern world without the role of culture, but also because history writing was directly influenced by cultural nationalism. Of course, the ignition of the modern sense of nationalism came with the French Revolution and its aftermath. As mentioned, the wars and resistance against foreign invaders in many European countries during this period provoked the consciousness of nationhood and strengthened argument of the needs of nation-states or at least political autonomy of a nation. But this historical experience evolved not only into the political current of nationalism in which individual nations sought sovereignty as independent states, but also into a new conception which viewed nations as fundamental, indispensable, natural and prerequisite units of human existence like families.<sup>16</sup> This view was a premise of cultural nationalism and its ideological precursor is a late-eighteenth century German philosopher, Johann Gottfried Herder. Although Herder was closer to the Enlightenment thinkers, his idea that the essence of human nature was preserved in the deeds of each nation had a great impact on intellectual circles in Europe. Inspired by Herder, many artists, musicians and writers tried to express essential national characters or the authentic spirit of the nation in their work, and numerous academics, critics and ideologues talked about national language, art, custom, folklore, and tradition in order to vindicate the uniqueness of their nation or superior virtues of their nationhood. Historical studies were no exception. It became normal for historians to narrate history in the national framework and discuss specific national characters which resulted in or from a national historical event.<sup>17</sup>

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macmillan, 2007), pp. 31–32; John Breuilly, 'Nationalism and Historians: Some reflections. The Formation of National(ist) Historiographical Discourse', in *Nationalism, Historiography and the (Re) Construction of the Past*, ed. by Claire Norton (Washington: New Academia, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994), pp. 41–46. Hutchinson categorised nationalism into two types; political nationalism and cultural nationalism. He emphasised the differences between the two. His argument in this categorisation, the necessity of the distinction for the better understanding of cultural aspects in nationalism, is plausible. Yet I think he went too far in implying that the former and the latter were 'competing' visions in nationalism. It often seems more realistic that they were mixed and inseparable like the both sides of a coin.

<sup>17</sup> On Herder and his influence on historical studies, see Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts', pp. 34–35; Breuilly, 'Nationalism and Historians', p. 2; Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, pp. 41–46. For nationalism in culture in the nineteenth century Europe see Breuilly, 'Nationalism and Historians', pp. 6–7; Joep Leerssen, 'Introduction: Philology and the European Construction of National Literatures', in *Editing the Nation's*

Yet, Herder did not actually identify history as bearing the essence of a nation. His main interest in the deeds of nations went to national language and literature. Apart from Herder's indirect inspiration, therefore, we should recognise another factor behind the cultural nationalist view and use of history: Romanticism and (as its product) Historicism. Romanticism was based on the belief that the essence of humanity could be better understood in the peculiarity and uniqueness of individuals rather than universality of human beings. As such, it paid more attention to personal emotions, passions and unique experiences, instead of commonsense or universal reason. When this tendency extended to the discourse of a nation, Romanticism looked to the past in order to seek peculiar collective experiences of the nation, and Romantic historicism was born.<sup>18</sup>

The greatest composer in nineteenth-century Italy, Giuseppe Verdi, exemplifies such a romanticised or historicised perception of history. Many of his operas were stories about heroic struggles set in historical episodes. He also once said in a letter to his friend, "Let us turn to the past: that will be progress".<sup>19</sup> This statement perfectly reflects the romantic view of history and metaphorically represents what cultural nationalist perception of history owed to Romanticism. Here, 'progress' is as important as 'turn to the past' because looking back to the past is, in this context, not about retreating but for regenerating. Cultural nationalists borrowed this idea. They believed that the nation needed the past, especially a 'heroic' and 'glorious' one, because recalling the nation's great achievements in the past made it contemplate its present status and consequently indicated the right way for the future. In other words, they sought to 'measure the present by reference to a heroic past for moral purposes'.<sup>20</sup> This is the role and use of history as

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*Memory: Textual Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Joep Leerssen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 13-27 (literature and philology); Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London: Profile Books, 2002), pp. 11-45 (History books and popular literature in England).

<sup>18</sup> On the basic conception of historicism, see Edmund Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> "Tornate all'antico e sarà un progresso." Quoted in Verdi's letter to Francesco Florimo (4 Jan, 1871). The English translation is from *Letters of Giuseppe Verdi*, ed. and trans. by Charles Osborne (London: Gollancz, 1971), p. 169.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 53.

a 'moral innovator' in the conception of cultural nationalism founded on the romantic historicist idea of history.<sup>21</sup>

The consequence of the impact of nationalist culture inspired by Romantic historicism was ubiquitous in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and even proliferated outside the continent from the late nineteenth century onwards. But here I will restrict myself to mentioning only the narrative forms of historical presentation in culture as it is the major concern of this thesis. First, such a romantic view of the national past can be found in literature. It brought the explosion of epic poems, historical novels and librettos of operas, which tended to set their stories in allegedly idealised historical scenes or to depict the protagonists of their stories, sometimes recreated legendary figures, as the true embodiment of national heroic characters. History writings too, followed along the same lines as literature. Thousands of amateur and professional historians such as Jacques Nicolas Augustin Thierry, Jules Michelet, Leopold von Ranke, Heinrich von Treitschke, Thomas Barbington Macaulay, Pasquale Villari, Francesco De Sanctis and their followers, joined this enthusiastic fervour to 'rediscover' nationality in history. They flocked into archives and libraries to uncover documentary evidence to support the antiquity of their national origins, the ethnic and cultural coherence of their nations, or the historical significance of their nation-states.<sup>22</sup> Historians were thus respected as, or at least appeared to be, the guardians of national memory and the teachers of national values in the peak of nationalism.<sup>23</sup>

However, such popularity of the historicist approach did not inevitably mean that historians affected by nationalism deliberately manipulated or falsified history for the political and ideological purposes. Academia in nineteen-century Europe not only saw the dominance of nationalism but also rigorously enshrined scientific objectivity as their maxim. Although some

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<sup>21</sup> Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, pp. 51-63 (quotation in p. 51); Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>22</sup> Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts', pp. 32-46; Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore, 'Apologias for the nation-state in Western Europe since 1800', in *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since 1800*, ed. by Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 10-11; Mandler, *History and National Life*, pp. 11-45; Mauro Moretti, 'The search for a "national" history: Italian historiographical trends following unification', in *Writing National Histories*, ed. by Berger and others, pp. 111-112; Raymond Grew, 'Culture and Society 1796-1896', in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796-1900*, ed. by John A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 225.

<sup>23</sup> Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts', p. 38.

historians felt the tension between maintaining scholarly objectivity and at the same time reading history for a national cause, the majority of their colleagues conducted their studies in the national or state-centred framework with the conviction that they did their best to be scientific and neutral.<sup>24</sup> In addition, as Anthony Smith points out, all intellectuals and historians were (and are still) not free from their social context, more precisely from 'pre-existing popular notions and collective memories' when they talked about their national history.<sup>25</sup> A 'national' history cannot be fabricated out of nothing. Hence any historical arguments about the nation even in the heyday of nationalism had to be elaborated within plausible common perceptions, traditions, myths, legends, and other presumed national essences which were widely shared (or agreed to be shared) by its members or potential members.<sup>26</sup>

When this nationalist zeal to define the nation through its culture and history encountered the pedagogic conception which underlined the function of education as a medium of socialisation, this led to the consolidation of teaching the national language, especially with literature, and to the introduction of teaching national history at schools. In the nineteenth-century pedagogical conception, it was generally accepted that one of the principal functions of schooling was to cultivate children into well-integrated members of the society. Along with this, there was the notion that the national language (and literature) was the incarnation of the national spirit and history revealed the 'divine' origins and a 'great' destiny of the nation, which was formed by the influence of Herder and Romantic historicism, and dominated high culture in Europe. Most of the leading educational professionals and government officials of the time were the main protagonists or consumers of these two ideas. Therefore, when they engaged in affairs and policy for public education, they enthusiastically backed teaching of the national language, literature and history in order to mould youngsters into homogenised members of the nation.<sup>27</sup>

This was at first only visible in secular institutions for higher education like universities, secondary schools and military academies. This meant that only the upper classes could experience history education at schools as the discourse of national history was generally the concern of high culture at the time. Yet, with the arrival of public education and mass schooling,

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<sup>24</sup> Berger, Donovan and Passmore, 'Apologias for the nation-state', pp. 4-9.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p. 116 (quotation in the same page).

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, pp. 41-44, 115-116. Heathorn also warns the danger of seeing any national historical narrative as the absolutely intentional and hypocritical manipulation; Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, p. 21 and Chapter 1.



history became one of the essential subjects taught in primary schools. Political and social changes in nineteenth-century Europe encouraged this process. Extensions of franchise, frequent military conflicts and imperialist competitions against neighbour nation-states, changing economic and social role of the working-classes and their class-consciousness, the advance of labour movements, successive revolutions and creations of new nation-states, all encouraged the ruling and upper classes to instil a sense of belonging to the state into the lower social strata. They thought that the content and messages of prevailing national discourses of history would be useful for instilling desirable moral values of citizens to the masses. These values included: respect of social order, loyalty to the nation-state, assiduous work-ethic, honesty, frugality, sincerity and so on. Compulsory mass schooling provided them with a good chance to execute it. Consequently, history formed a core part of the school curriculum in mass education system by the early twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> France was a pioneer in this process. Already in the 1830s, popular nationalist history books written by Thierry and Michelet were in use at schools and Ernest Lavisse's history textbook was extensively disseminated in French schools under the Third Republic. Prussia and northern European countries such as Denmark soon followed the French example. Britain and newly independent or united countries like Belgium, Greece, Italy, and eastern European nations followed in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> So, why is modern Italy particularly worth examining among these cases? What can Italy's experience tell us about the relationship between nationalism and history education in the process of building a public education system and modern nation-state?

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<sup>28</sup> Breuilly, 'Nationalism and Historians', p. 7; John Breuilly, 'Nationalism and the Making of National Pasts', in *Nations and their Histories: Constructions and representations*, ed. by Susana Cavalho and François Gemenne (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 16-17; Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> For the French case, see Ceri Crossley, 'History as a principle of legitimation in France (1820-48)', in *Writing National Histories*, ed. by Berger and others, pp. 49-56; Mandler, *History and National Life*, pp. 16-17; Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p. 39. For the examples of central and eastern European nations, see Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). As for Prussia and Germany, see George Iggers, 'Nationalism and historiography, 1789-1996: the German example in historical perspective', in *Writing National Histories*, ed. by Berger and others, pp. 15-29. On Britain, Heathorn, *For Home, Country*. The Italian case is documented in Anna Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*; Giovanni Genovesi, *Storia della scuola in Italia dal Settecento a oggi* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1998). An excellent study by Boyd illustrates the Spanish case; Boyd, *Historia Patria*. For the other European countries, refer to Breuilly and others, *Nations and their Histories*, ed. by Cavalho and Gemenne.

### **Nation-state building and (history) education in Italy: from Liberalism to Fascism**

History education in modern Italy is a perfect example of what could happen in public education during the process of a modern nation-state building. It is not only because Italy was one of the first modern nation-states which consciously, intentionally, and systematically tried to use history education to construct the national identity. It is also because the vicissitude of public education in Italy –its failures, misfortunes, success and transitions– are excellent examples of the inter-relationship between a nation-state and its public schooling system in the modern world. This part, thus, will examine failures and achievements of the liberal governments, the ideological and cultural conflicts over the historical interpretation and their impact on education in the liberal era. It will move on to examining the importance of Fascist education in the study of Italian history, particularly in the context of constructing the nation-state and national identity.

Since Gaetano Salvemini and Roberto Vivarelli, many historians have demonstrated that liberalism in Italy failed, not completely, but significantly enough to concede power to Fascism.<sup>30</sup> The same view is generally held in education. Although it might go too far in stating the overall ‘failure’ of Liberal Italy in education, it is also true that sometimes the liberal regimes unduly made educational and pedagogical problems more complicate and left many unsolved which was serious enough to generate criticisms and resentments from various sectors of the society. So, what was wrong with education in Liberal Italy? As many historians and Italian intellectuals have

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<sup>30</sup> Salvemini was the first historian who implied that the failures of Italian liberalism invited Fascist seizure of power in lectures given at Harvard University during his exile though he also accused the Monarch, the Army and the Vatican of being jointly responsible. Vivarelli was one of the first scholars who recognised the academic significance of this Salvemini’s argument and was inspired by it. He elaborated this argument in his own works and consequently had a great influence on other historians. For the Salvemini’s argument, see Gaetano Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia: Lezioni di Harvard* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1972). Vivarelli’s evaluation of Salvemini’s Harvard lectures can be found in the introduction of the English translated edition. See Gaetano Salvemini, *The origins of Fascism in Italy*, ed. by Roberto Vivarelli (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. vii–xiii. We can see a development of Salvemini’s thesis by Vivarelli’s hands in Roberto Vivarelli, *Il fallimento del liberalismo: studi sulle origini del fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981). Among scholars who back the Salvemini’s thesis, Mabel Berezin explicitly admits the inspiration from Vivarelli’s work. Refer to Berezin, *Making the fascist*, p. 15 (especially footnote no. 17).

pointed out, the main problem was the substantial discord between 'legal' Italy and 'real' Italy.<sup>31</sup> Education was no exception in this respect.

First, the ruling classes of the united Italy had a contradictory aspiration for their new country. They eagerly wanted to transform Italy into one of the most modernised and 'civilised' states: a prosperous economy, a respectable culture, to be a competitive political and military power, and able to compete with its more 'advanced' European counterparts. They were, on the other hand, very unwilling and reluctant to encourage any rapid or radical changes in the existing social order and the established hegemonic groups. This tendency was particularly apparent in the first decades after Unification and was retained longer among the ruling class of the South.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, because liberalist pedagogical principles and practices in educational policy were shaped by such contradictory motivations, Italian liberal governments tended to hold dual standards and purposes in their educational policy. In particular, they drew a strict distinction between mass public schooling for the ruled classes and the one for the ruling. The former was largely designed to mould a more controllable and productive masses. Its ultimate goal was to instil respect for the social order, a sense of belonging to the nation-state and desirable work ethics into children with a minimum standard of reading, writing, arithmetic, and cultural awareness. On the contrary, the latter put too much stress upon teaching 'cultured' subjects like philosophy, classics, Latin, history and literature and neglected the teaching of practical skills.<sup>33</sup> In secondary education, this distinction was clearly more noticeable. Since the legislation of the Casati Law in 1859, there had generally been two types of schools at secondary level of the kingdom's education system; technical / normal schools (equivalent to vocational / teacher training schools) and *ginnasi / licei* (equivalent to middle / high schools).<sup>34</sup> In theory, the

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<sup>31</sup> John A. Davis, *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-century Italy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 11; Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia: The Myth of the Nation in the Twentieth Century*, trans. by Suzanne Dingee and Jenifer Pudney (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 59; Alberto Asor Rosa, 'La Cultura', in *Storia d'Italia: dall'Unità ad oggi*, 10 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1972-77), IV, 2 (1975), p. 1234.

<sup>32</sup> Giuseppe Ricuperati, 'La scuola nell'Italia unita', in *Storia d'Italia: I documenti*, 10 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1972-77), V, 2 (1973), pp. 1700-1; Edward R. Tannenbaum, 'Education', in *Modern Italy: A Topical History Since 1861*, ed. by Emiliana P. Noether and Edward R. Tannenbaum (New York: New York University Press, 1974), pp. 233-34.

<sup>33</sup> Ester De Fort, *La Scuola elementare dall'Unità alla caduta del fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), pp. 139, 144, 199-200; G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, p. 104; Tannenbaum, 'Education', pp. 231-32.

<sup>34</sup> G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 106-8.

existence of the distinction itself between the masses and the elites in schooling is not seriously problematic. However, in Liberal Italy, the segregation was too strict. It was not only a matter of huge difference in the contents and quality of their teaching, and in composition of students' social backgrounds. The future prospects for pupils in these types of schools were also immensely different. Access to universities, which were the only channel to become a member of the most privileged professions such as lawyers, judges, medical doctors, university professors etc., was open exclusively to *licei* graduates. The problem was that as Italy became more industrialised and modernised, a growing number of lower middle-class and some better-to-do working class parents began to expect greater social mobility for their children. Due to their limited financial and social influences, education was the best investment for their children's future. However, children from the lower classes only had very limited chances to enter *ginnasi* or *licei*. Except for a few faculties of engineering and science, Italian universities in principle did not allow vocational school students' admission throughout the liberal era. This became seen as a kind of social discrimination and bourgeois snobbery especially from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards when the country's economy expanded faster.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the dual system of schooling, there was another problem in education derived from the discord between principle and practice in liberal politics. The governments in Liberal Italy ultimately intended to centralise public education whereas, in practice, municipalities were responsible for managing and funding public elementary schools for nearly half a century.<sup>36</sup> It was a partially understandable choice to avoid potential direct conflicts with existing private agencies in education like the Catholic Church. Also given the liberal doctrine of *laissez-faire*, not being directly involved in managing every single school looked like a more natural position for the central government.<sup>37</sup> The problem, however, was that the governments did not supply enough resources to municipalities for the running of schools. This resulted in poor quality of

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<sup>35</sup> Lamberto Borghi, *Educazione e autorità nell'Italia moderna* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1951; repr. 1967), pp. 99-101; Tannenbaum, 'Education', p. 235.

<sup>36</sup> Ricuperati, 'La scuola nell'Italia', p. 1707; Tannenbaum, 'Education', p. 235. It was not until 1911 when most Italian communes were released from the burden of running primary schools in their areas by the Daneo-Credaro law.

<sup>37</sup> De Fort, *La Scuola elementare*, pp. 100-11; G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 105-6; Giuseppe Talamo, 'Centralismo e autonomia nell'organizzazione scolastica dalla legge Casati alla Prima guerra mondiale', in Antonio Santoni Rugiu and others, *Storia della scuola e storia d'Italia dall'Unità ad oggi* (Bari: De Donato, 1982), p. 103.

primary schooling and later caused the failure in significantly reducing illiteracy which was one of the most urgent priorities in educational policy to help modernise the country. Obviously, neither the lack of proper material support for public education nor the failure to improve literacy was entirely the fault of the governments. The economic and social conditions of the state hampered the government's education policies. The financial burden of the Wars of Independence and the Unification was enormous, and restricted the availability of the governmental funds for a long time. Scepticism and resistance of the peasants and their landlords in the poorest areas was also an obstacle to imposing compulsory schooling for children.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that the liberal regimes could have better supported education financially, given the fact that a much larger proportion of the governmental budget was spent on military affairs than on education. For nearly 40 years after the Unification, the kingdom never spent more than 3 percent of its annual budget on education, while its military expenditure was a quarter of the governmental income in the late 1880s and still remained three or four times larger (approximately 15 percent of the state revenue) than the spending on education in 1910.<sup>39</sup> It was thus a miscalculation of the liberal regimes to expect that they could eradicate illiteracy without sufficient material investment and coherent and concrete efforts. Though the attendance at primary schools consistently increased, this did not mean that the population's literacy immediately improved. Many children from the poorest families did not see the benefit of studying and only attended schools for two or three years. As such, their literacy skills often diminished and many of them became illiterate again soon after leaving school.<sup>40</sup> In order to promote literacy, the governments should have provided better prospects for poor children to improve their lives through education, supplied more resources to schools and taken more resolute measures to impose the regulation of obligatory schooling.

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<sup>38</sup> Borghi, *Educazione e autorità*, pp. 97-98; Tannenbaum, 'Education', p. 234.

<sup>39</sup> De Fort, *La Scuola elementare*, pp. 185-97; G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, p. 229 (see table no. 14); Tannenbaum, 'Education', p. 234; John Wittham, *The Politics of the Italian Army 1861-1918* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 150-51.

<sup>40</sup> De Fort, *La Scuola elementare*, pp. 117-18; G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 76-81; Grew, 'Culture and Society', pp. 224-25; Tannenbaum, 'Education', pp. 234-35. In Liberal Italy, the official duration of compulsory schooling was three or four years (imposed by the Coppino law in 1877) and this was extended up to six years in 1904. But Tannenbaum informs us that the reality was 'those who completed the first two grades satisfactorily were usually not required to continue any further'.

Apart from the government's failures and other problems in educational policy, there are other reasons to understand Italian public education and its history teaching from the perspective of modern nation-state building. Italy's transition from liberalism to Fascism accompanied the shift of the ideological and cultural hegemony over the interpretation of national past and future whose consequence affected public education. At the climax of the Risorgimento, the view of the nation and its history seemed relatively homogeneous. According to this vision, the independent and newly unified Italian nation under the same flag of a single state was the inevitable outcome of the humanity's historical progress. This nation-state, again according to the same vision, must be an example and a teacher of 'civilised' nations with its 'superior' culture, heritage and humanitarian values.<sup>41</sup> This idea of the new nation-state's destiny was for a while generally accepted and liberalism led the country following its understanding of this vision after the Unification. However, as the ideological current gradually changed from the late nineteenth-century, this liberal interpretation of Italy's destiny began to be challenged.

The main challenge was the political identity of the nation-state. Staunch republicans repudiated the constitutional monarchy and accused liberals of compromising with the House of Savoy or manipulating the process of Unification. Intransigent Catholics too attacked the new nation-state, especially after the annexation of Rome to Italy. They opposed secularism of the Italian state claiming that Catholicism was and had always been the essence of Italian identity. Also socialists became a new threat to the liberal state owing not only to their populist political inclination, but also to their internationalism and class-based, rather than national, identity.<sup>42</sup> Yet there were challenges from culture as well. The cultural and ideological hegemony of upper class liberals, which had predominated over the nation's cultural life since the Unification with its passionate, romantic, humanitarian, optimistic but naive attitude towards the human progress, was crumbling. Various new ideas and cultural trends loomed over the horizon and soon competed against each other. Idealism, positivism, social Darwinism, eugenics, cultural imperialism, socialism, futurism and other avant-garde movements, all demanded cultural, ideological, and moral reform or renewal of the nation which insisted that the liberal bourgeois vision of the Risorgimento was decadent and should be replaced. As Emilio Gentile has pointed out, this contention over ideological and cultural hegemony led to the creation of more favourable conditions in which bolder and more radical sects prevailed. As a result, the meaning and the values of the Risorgimento were interpreted in more exclusive, aggressive and

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<sup>41</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 3-62.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.; Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, p. 11; Borghi, *Educazione e autorità*, p. 89.

chauvinistic ways. The self-determination of the nation became the right to exclude ethnic minorities from the community. The prosperity of the nation was conceived as the right to acquire and exploit colonies. The 'civilizing' mission was understood as Italy's destiny to be an imperial superpower. Of course, the struggle for ideological / cultural hegemony was not the sole factor in yielding this mutated interpretation of the Risorgimento. Domestic social issues and foreign political affairs also acted as catalysts. Colonial wars in Ethiopia and Libya, the emergence of mass democracy and mass production, increasing labour conflicts and social unrests, all contributed to the transformation in the interpretation of the Risorgimento and its ideal. The decisive blow came with the First World War. During the Great War, various radicals in culture converged on supporting or inspiring extreme demagoguery political movements with their fanaticism; Fascism was one of the major beneficiaries of such a cultural and ideological atmosphere in Italy.<sup>43</sup>

All of these mutations in the ideological and cultural environment affected education in Italy. Many educational professionals and campaigners, such as Salvemini, Ernesto Codignola and Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, criticised the liberal education policy and demanded reform in accordance with their ideal of the nation-state.<sup>44</sup> Educational materials and the government's official presentation of history were also affected. Continual conflicts with the Vatican made governments highlight the secular origins of the Italian unification while being cautious not to offend the nation's Catholic sentiment. The growth of socialism and the emergence of anarchist movement encouraged the liberal regimes to consolidate patriotic values. With colonial enterprises in Africa, justifications and apologetic comments for imperialism began to appear in

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<sup>43</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 65-70, 74-76; Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 10-12. Gentile explains that changes of ideological and cultural conception of the Risorgimento appeared around the Jubilee of the Kingdom were 'metamorphoses' of the Risorgimento's original values. He is right in the sense that these changes were in general moving in more exclusive, aggressive and chauvinistic directions. Yet his thesis seems to tacitly presuppose that the authentic ideals of the Risorgimento were nothing but good and Anna Ascenzi seemingly has the same presupposition. I am reluctant to accept this whether they really intended such a premise or not. So, by avoiding the term 'metamorphosis', I tried to explain this mutation in the view of the Risorgimento's values as the outcome of struggles or competitions for cultural / ideological hegemony which happened in the social and political context of the epoch. Actually, Gentile also depicts this mutation as a partial consequence of hostile debates and quarrels between different concepts of the Risorgimento though he observes it in the political, not cultural, dimension.

<sup>44</sup> On Codignola and Lombardo-Radice, see *Dictionary of Modern Italian History*, ed. by Frank J. Coppa (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 84, 241.

school textbooks. The Great War brought more nationalistic tones and the exaltation of heroism in children's literature and school curricula.<sup>45</sup>

However, to point out Liberal Italy's errors and the challenges to the ideological or cultural hegemony of liberalism does not signify that the liberal regimes entirely failed to manage the country and were opposed because of that reason. Rather, despite its limitations and shortcomings, Liberal Italy achieved much, including; a relatively rapid pace of industrialisation and modernisation, constant improvement of the living conditions, economic growth, increasing influence and power in international politics and so on. Italy was constantly marching forwards in every aspect. Above all, liberalism's most notable achievement was establishment of the consensus that Italy should keep its sovereignty as a single state. Under liberal rule, voices insisting on the restoration of pre-Unification status died out. No one thought that it was possible or desirable to repeal the Unification. Even Antonio Gramsci, who was one of the most important critics of the Risorgimento, never opposed the necessity of Unification itself.<sup>46</sup> But this is not to argue that Liberal Italy succeeded in making Italians identify with the apparatus of the liberal state and liberal democracy in their country. Many contemporary Italians, particularly since the turn of the twentieth century, identified themselves as citizens of the Italian state but believed that they had the wrong government and an unworthy ruling class.<sup>47</sup> This is the reason why many adversaries of the liberal state proposed their own ideas to reinvigorate the real values of the Risorgimento and accused the ruling class liberal bourgeois of degeneration and corruption rather than arguing for the abolition of the unified state itself. In short, liberalism in Italy ironically collapsed partially thanks to its achievements. Though the country improved

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<sup>45</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 23-39; Anna Ascenzi, *Tra educazione etico-civile e costruzione dell'identità nazionale: L'insegnamento della storia nelle scuole italiane dell'Ottocento* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2004), chapter 2 and 3; Ricuperati, 'La scuola nell'Italia', pp. 1700-12.

<sup>46</sup> According to Breuilly, "there was a strong restorationist sense to opposition" against an extended form of the Italian state centred on Piedmont in earlier decades of the eighteenth century in Italy. John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 101-2. Within a few decades after Unification, this separatist sentiment almost disappeared from over-ground politics until the later-half of the twentieth century when the Northern League and the Sicilian separatist movement (re) emerged. Despite his fame with the 'passive revolution' theory, we cannot find any comment made by Gramsci to support separatism. For his writings on the Risorgimento and the Unification see Antonio Gramsci, *Il Risorgimento* (Rome: Riuniti, 1991), or Antonio Gramsci, *Il Risorgimento e l'Unità d'Italia* (Rome: Donzelli, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 70-74.



markedly under liberalism, it still seemed unimpressive and meagre in the eyes of many who were encouraged by the progress to have bigger expectations. Salvemini, one of the harshest critics of the liberal regime in the Giolittian era, agonisingly admitted this later:

"Italy was oppressed by its past. [...] Instead of comparing their present with their immediate past, and abecoming aware of the route that their people were taking with heroic and silent effort, the men of the Italian intelligentsia judged the present conditions according to the criterion of memories of former greatness or dreams of impossible primacy. The result was that no measure of progress could satisfy them."<sup>48</sup>

This vicious circle produced a crisis when the function of liberal democracy and its governmental system seriously stagnated. Liberalism began to lose its authority and control, and was eventually removed not by a revolution or a conspiracy, but by its own legitimate procedure of regime change, although impending threats of a coup certainly contributed to the process.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that Liberal Italy's achievements to some extent contributed to its downfall can also be verified by the vicissitude in the country's public education. Italy is one of the best examples among modern nation-states which consciously, intentionally, and systematically attempted to mobilise history education in the construction of a national identity, regardless of whether this process was successful or not. Certainly there were precedents of other modern nation-states, like the French Third Republic and Prussia (before and after the German unification), which tried to use history teaching to inculcate a sense of nationhood and patriotism upon their children. However, Italy is a better example in demonstrating how a newly created nation-state built, regulated and utilised its public education system according to its political agenda, and in demonstrating the consequences of this. Generally speaking, in a newly independent or unified

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<sup>48</sup> "L'Italia era schiacciata dal suo passato. [...] Invece di porre a confronto il loro presente con il loro passato immediato e prender coscienza del cammino che il loro popolo andava compiendo con eroico e silenzioso sforzo, gli uomini della intelligenza italiana giudicavano le condizioni presenti secondo il metro dei ricordi di una passata grandezza o dei sogni di primati impossibili. La conseguenza fu che nessuna misura di progresso poteva soddisfarli." Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo*, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander De Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), pp. 34-37; Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy 1919-1929*, revised edn (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 77-93; Donald Sassoon, *Mussolini and the Rise of Fascism* (London: Harper Press, 2007), pp. 120-43.

nation-state, nationalism also has an influence on public education. The new state's government is usually led by the nationalist leaders of the independent or unification movement, or at least includes some of those leaders in the cabinet members. Therefore, it is not difficult to anticipate that these leaders' nationalistic fervour may somehow leave a mark on the state's educational policy.<sup>50</sup>

This is what happened in modern Italy. Many patriots and intellectuals who had participated in wars or revolutionary conspiracies and insurrections in the Risorgimento, joined local or central governments after the Unification and some of them, for example Giuseppe La Farina, Ruggero (Ruggiero) Bonghi and Francesco De Sanctis, were deeply involved in the formation of public education in the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>51</sup> Also united Italy, immediately after its creation, quickly imposed the teaching of history and the Italian language on all public primary and secondary schools as core subjects of the curriculum, although it took longer for a fully fledged nationalist element to emerge in history teaching.<sup>52</sup> Yet the most important fact was that the Fascist leaders were the first generation educated at schools in Liberal Italy. Benito Mussolini, Michele Bianchi, Italo Balbo, Emilio De Bono, Cesare Maria De Vecchi, Roberto Farinacci, Giovanni Gentile etc., all notable leading Fascists, who participated in taking power or forming the first Fascist government, were born after the Unification and went through school in the liberal era. Despite this, they still learnt nationalist values and culture from liberal public education, but they also felt there was something insufficient and missing in liberal nationalism. Hence it was the Fascist

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, pp. 39–41.

<sup>51</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 22, 25, 30; Ascenzi, *Tra educazione etico-civile*, p. 177; *Dictionary of Modern Italian*, pp. 47–48, 121–22, 227–28; G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 241–243; Simonetta Soldani, 'Il Risorgimento a scuola: incertezza dello Stato e lenta formazione di un pubblico di lettori' in *Alfredo Oriani e la cultura del suo tempo*, ed. by Ennio Dirani (Ravenna: Longo, 1985), p. 149. La Farina, a Sicilian patriotic conspirator and the most trusted collaborator of Cavour, was not only involved in politics and administration of the Cavour government before and after the Unification, but also wrote some of the most widely circulated history textbooks in the first decade of Liberal Italy; *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850* (1851), *La storia d'Italia raccontata ai giovinetti* (1855) and *Storia del medio evo e dei tempi moderni* (1878). A Neapolitan anti-Bourbon scholar Bonghi became the Minister of Public Instruction in 1874 and actively intervened in adoption and use of history textbooks in schools. Francesco De Sanctis, regarded as one of the most significant scholars in history of Italian literature and language in the nineteenth century, served as Minister of Public Instruction three times in the unified Italy.

<sup>52</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, p. 20; Antonio Santoni Rugiu, 'Orientamenti culturali, strumenti didattici, insegnanti e insegnamenti', in Santoni Rugiu and others, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 11–12.

regime which eventually forced schools to embrace a 'real' nationalism in deliberate and synthetic manners. The public education of Italy thus underwent the biggest injection of nationalism since Unification under Fascism, and history was used as the regime's main instrument for this. As a result, for the first time in the history of Italy, a sizable proportion of the population in the peninsula, not only the upper classes but also the masses and peasants, had a sense of belonging to their nation in the *Ventennio*.<sup>53</sup>

So, what kind of nationalism was injected by Fascism? How was it different from liberal nationalism? At first, the Fascist regime redefined the ideal Italian nation-state; a hegemonic power with vast colonies, military might, a prosperous economy, and a fully modernised culture under Fascism. This new goal for the nation's future also required a new type of national identity. So the regime embarked on a project to regenerate Italians, *la bonifica umana* (human reclamation). Mussolini's regime incessantly launched various campaigns of *bonifica* during its reign; *bonifica agricola*, *bonifica igenica*, *bonifica della cultura*, *bonifica integrale* and *bonifica umana*. The purpose of these campaigns was not only as propaganda to keep the regime's revolutionary image and rhetoric alive or to support a positive image amongst the masses. Equally, these campaigns were not merely for a cunning political manoeuvre to keep people distracted from high politics. As cultural historian Ruth Ben-Ghiat argues, the regime's *bonifica* campaigns should be perceived not only as a political manoeuvre but also as an integral part of the Fascist modernisation projects and *la bonifica umana* was at the centre.<sup>54</sup> Modernisation, I think, should be understood as a part of Fascism's ambition to change Italy according with its own ideal. As such, this study will approach to Fascism's *bonifica umana* from the wider perspective of the regime's attempt to create a new Italian nation-state. *Bonifica umana* was in the end designed to transform Italians into ideal Fascist men and women by cleansing decadent traits or habits and inculcating them with the Fascist identity of disciplined empire builders.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 14-15; Claudia Lazzaro, 'Forging a Visible Fascist Nation: Strategies for Fusing Past and Present', in *Donatello among the Blackshirts: History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy*, ed. by Roger J. Crum and Claudia Lazzaro (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 13; Tannenbaum, 'Education', p. 239.

<sup>54</sup> Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, pp. 4-8.

<sup>55</sup> For the Fascist concept of *bonifica umana* see Paolo Orano, 'Prefazione', in Benito Mussolini, *Le direttive del Duce: agricoltura e bonifiche*, ed. by Paolo Orano (Rome: Pinciana, 1937), pp. 9-10; Francesco Orestano, 'Adunanza inaugurale', in *Accademia Reale d'Italia, Convegno di scienze morali e storiche: l'Africa*, 2 vols (Rome: Accademia Reale d'Italia, 1939), I, 38-51; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'Modernity is just over there:

The nationalism that the regime attempted to imbue through education was based on this Fascist aspiration for a 'new' Italy. Nationalism, for the Fascists, meant not only patriotism, or love of *patria*, but also absolute obedience to the state and authority, perfect discipline, machine like efficiency and precision by individuals at work. In subsequent chapters, I will support this view with close reading of the Fascist educational materials.

One might think that schools in Liberal Italy were successful in the sense that they were at least able to indoctrinate nationalism or national identity into the youth. On the other hand, others might cite that schooling in the liberal era failed to transmit the right kind of nationalism because many in the first generations who grew up under liberal education were discontent with what they had been taught, and became supporters of a distorted nationalism (chauvinism, imperialistic nationalism, ethnic nationalism, Fascism etc.): some of these supporters, the Fascists, finally engaged in overthrowing the liberal government. Both arguments are associated with the same question: continuity or discontinuity in the concepts of nation / nationhood in education and presentations of history between the liberal era and the *Ventennio*. Some studies have already demonstrated the continuity<sup>56</sup> and there are many other academic works which comment on organic developments or similarities in rhetoric, metaphors and methodology between liberal historiography and its Fascist counterpart.<sup>57</sup> Placing too much stress upon continuity, however, could mislead us into thinking that liberal education was the cultivator of Fascism.<sup>58</sup> Also regarding one of the main goals of this dissertation, which is to dissect the appeals of the Fascist version of history within educational textbooks, continuities and discontinuities will be focussed on.

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Colonialism and Italian National Identity', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 8, no. 3 (2006), 380-93 (p. 382).

<sup>56</sup> Joshua Arthurs, '(Re)Presenting Roman History in Italy, 1911-1955', in *Nationalism, Historiography*, ed. by Norton, pp. 29-43; Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*. Banti's work is particularly noteworthy. In this book, he directly examines the elements of rhetorical, structural and 'morphological' continuity in discourses on the nation, nationhood and national identity from the Unification to the fascist era although he largely focuses on cultural phenomena rather than in education.

<sup>57</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 7; Romke Visser, 'Pax Augusta and Pax Mussoliniana', in *The Power of Imagery: Essays on Rome, Italy and Imagination*, ed. by Peter van Kessel (Rome: Nederlands Instituut te Rome, 1993), pp. 113-15.

<sup>58</sup> Corner, 'Liberalism, Pre-Fascism, Fascism', pp. 12-13.

It is true that the Fascist discourse of the nation and national history inherited lexicons, rhetoric, metaphors and even some narrative structures from the culture of Liberal Italy.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, there is an undeniable difference between the two; the motive, in other words, their ultimate aims in using history. Liberals tended to view history as the progressive realisation of reason, justice and freedom which was expected to substitute for the pre-modern theocratic ideal of human society. Thus, for liberals, the purpose of history education was nothing more than enlightening people in this lesson of history. In this respect, Italian liberalism was no exception. Despite its variations, all ideological fathers of the Risorgimento and prominent liberal ideologues in Italy shared this idea as their ideological premise.<sup>60</sup> Fascism radically dismissed this liberal view of history and returned to the theocratic and authoritarian ideal. Even when liberalism was merged in patriotic or nationalist movements for the purpose of independence and the unification, it sought to balance the harmony of individual freedom with the sense of belonging or collectiveness, as the history of the Risorgimento testifies. No leader of the Risorgimento or the liberal government dared to abolish this principle, although they sometimes violated it in the name of the national interest when brutally repressing popular demonstrations or peasant protests.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, Fascism focused on the superiority of the collective over individual freedom and reason, and placed the collective form of human existence, i.e., the nation-state at the centre of history. This was because, for the Fascists, history was not the record of human progress for freedom, reason, and justice. Instead, they saw history as the endless struggle for power, survival and domination between distinctive human groups, the nations. Accordingly, the secret of survival and success in this struggle was the

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<sup>59</sup> Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>60</sup> Vincenzo Cuoco and others, *Il pensiero pedagogico del Risorgimento*, ed. by Lamberto Borghi (Florence: Giuntine-Sansoni, 1958). This book is the edited selection of the various Risorgimento thinkers' (Antonio Rosmini, Vincenzo Gioberti, Camillo Cavour, Bertrando Spaventa, Giuseppe Mazzini, De Sanctis, Carlo Cattaneo etc.) writings on education and pedagogical ideas. For the exact comment on the shared ideal mentioned above, see the editor's 'Introduzione', p. xi.

<sup>61</sup> Garibaldi's right-hand man, Nino Bixio's violent suppression of a Sicilian peasant riot in 1860 and Fiorenzo Bava-Beccaris's ruthless repression of Milan protestors in 1898 are well known examples. For more details, see Davis, *Conflict and Control*, pp. 38-65, 187-210; Adrian Lyttelton, 'Landlords, Peasants, and the Limits of Liberalism', in *Gramsci and Italy's Passive Revolution*, ed. by John A. Davis (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 104-35.

noble sense of the state which aspired “authority, order and internal discipline” and taught individuals to “subordinate to the national values” from the Fascist point of view.<sup>62</sup>

Such a difference in motive between liberalism and Fascism to interpret and use history brought many changes, alterations and new inventions in history education during the Fascist era. It not only motivated the introduction of the state textbook in the elementary schools, but also substantially changed the relationship between the educational government authority and the publishers and authors of the school textbooks.<sup>63</sup> What is more significant, however, is that the different intentions of the Fascists brought new styles, narrative strategies, and points of stress in their history education materials, which I provisionally assume to be one of the major factors that made the Fascist interpretation of history appealing. Yet, an analysis of the persuasive elements and effective methodologies within Fascist history education materials has not been carried out. Certainly, there are studies on education in Fascist Italy and some of them, which have mostly come out in recent years in Italy, to some extent deal with the fascist educational materials such as school textbooks, youth organisations’ manuals and juvenile magazines.<sup>64</sup> However, their main research interest is different from this thesis. They handle the everyday life of students and teachers at fascist schools or the regime’s legal, administrative, institutional and political control over education. Even studies which deal with educational materials do not focus on how the fascist regime applied its historiography to education. Therefore, this study will

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<sup>62</sup> Francesco Ercole, ‘I valori storici e ideali della Rivoluzione fascista’, in his *Dal nazionalismo al Fascismo* (Rome: De Alberti, 1928), pp. 179–201 (quotation in pp. 195–96). Ercole, a historian of Medieval, Renaissance and political thought and Minister of National Education (1932–35), gave this lecture to commemorate the anniversary of March on Rome at the seat of *Fascio di Palermo* in 28 October 1925.

<sup>63</sup> On the fascist regime’s motivations to nationalize elementary school textbooks, see Gabriella Ciampi, ‘Il Risorgimento e la scuola fascista’, *Il Risorgimento: Il mito del Risorgimento nell’Italia unita (Atti del Convegno Milano, 9–12 novembre 1993)*, 43, no. 1–2 (1995), 369–83. For the changes in the relationship between the regime and the publishers, refer to Galfré, *Il regime degli*

<sup>64</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*; Elena D’Ambrosio, *A scuola col duce: L’istruzione primaria nel ventennio fascista* (Como: Istituto di Storia Contemporanea di Como, 2001); Francesca Dello Preite, *Il fascismo e l’educazione primaria: l’esempio di Campi Salentina* (Lecce: Pensa multimedia, 2006); Carlo Galeotti, *Saluto al Duce!: I catechismi del Balilla e della piccola italiana* (Rome: Gremese, 2001); Davide Montino, *Le parole educate: libri e quaderni tra fascismo e Repubblica* (Milan: Selene, 2005); P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*; Piero Fossati, *I maestri del regime: Storia di un maestro nell’Italia fascista* (Milan: Unicopli, 2009); George L. Williams, *Fascist Thought and Totalitarianism in Italy’s Secondary Schools: Theory and Practice 1922–1943*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

redress this gap with a close investigation of the historical narratives in Fascist school textbooks, which expects to expose idiosyncrasy, fascinations, and limitations in the Fascist interpretation and use of history.

## **Conclusion**

Modern public education in the form of mass schooling was born during the building of modern nation-states. During the process of modernisation, modern states needed to convert indigenous people in their territories into 'good' citizens, and schools were charged with this task thanks to the pedagogical conception which gave attention to the function of socialisation of schooling. Once schools embarked on this mission, history and the national language (and literature) quickly became the primary subjects. Cultural nationalism and its notion of history, which were formed under the influence of Herder and Romantic historicism in the nineteenth century, contributed to this by persuading educators, intellectuals, and politicians to believe that the national language and history were the incarnation and transmitter of the nation's essence.

Modern Italy illustrated all of these processes and correlations. Public education in united Italy followed the exact direction mentioned above. Many of the contributors to the Unification were involved in educational affairs and laid the foundations of the public education system in the newly unified country. Their conception of nationhood and the national past was greatly influenced by cultural nationalism and this conception was spread through public schooling. As a result, Italians became accustomed and accepted the need to being compatriots as part of a united nation-state. However, education in Liberal Italy was not without its problems. As many scholars have pointed out, there existed a huge disparity between 'legal' Italy and 'real' Italy and this, in the field of education, to some extent was exacerbated by the mistakes of liberal governments. The country's cultural and ideological currents also became unfavourable for liberal regimes' education policies from the dawn of the twentieth century. Liberal interpretations of nationhood and history were seriously challenged and eventually the rule of liberalism itself became unpopular for many Italians. Among them, were the Fascists whose leaders were the first generation raised under the liberal education system who also became disaffected with liberalism. They contended that Italy needed a 'revolution' because Italian liberalism was totally corrupted and therefore should be overthrown. Historian Paul Corner, assessing Fascist rhetoric of 'revolution', once said:

"[...] the claim to 'revolution' served to mark out Fascism as something radically different from the despised liberal Italy which the Fascist regime had replaced. [...] What was important was to assert *breach* with the past; the content of that 'revolution' was essentially of secondary importance."<sup>65</sup>

For a long time, this negative view of Fascism's self-definition as 'revolutionary' was widely accepted in the study of education in Fascist Italy. To some extent it might be true. Fascism came to power without a genuinely Fascist theory or a detailed educational policy.<sup>66</sup> So the regime accepted Giovanni Gentile's idea of the educational reform and claimed it 'the most Fascist' reform despite its fundamentally conservative liberal, not Fascist, nature. The Fascists needed something to mark their emphatic break from the liberal state, and Gentile's plan was the only available idea in educational reform when they first seized power.<sup>67</sup> However, Fascism's lack of an articulated programme does not mean we should ignore the Fascist education. As we have seen above, the vicissitudes in education under the Fascist regime were an outcome of the linear process in nation-state and national identity construction, and the formation of a public education system in modern Italy. In other words, the various vicissitudes occurred in Liberal Italy -Problems and errors of the liberal state in the building process of public schooling, ideological and cultural challenges to the established hegemony of liberalism in a rapidly modernising society, paradoxical discontents against the liberal governments created by their achievements in education, inherited nationalistic elements from the Risorgimento and the liberal era in education and culture etc.- persuade us of the need to understand Fascist history education in the context of Italy's modern nation-state building.

Yet this study will concentrate on Fascist education itself rather than seeing it as part of the broader transition in modern Italian public education. This is not only because some studies have already analysed the continuity of nationalistic elements in historical presentations and education between Liberal Italy and Fascist Italy. It is also because we have to examine, "why there was no apparent uniqueness to Fascism?" Obviously, there is, otherwise, studying Fascism itself will be meaningless. The point is that we can grasp Fascism as a once ruling but eventually failed

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<sup>65</sup> Corner, 'Liberalism, Pre-Fascism, Fascism', p. 11 (Italic from the original).

<sup>66</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, p. 33; Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, *Education in Fascist Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 64-65.

<sup>67</sup> G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, pp. 125-27. To find out more about Gentile Reform, see Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, pp. 35-41; Ricuperati, 'La scuola nell'Italia', pp. 1711-18.



ideology when we recognise its appeals and limitations. Education, particularly history education, could be a potential area to tease out these elements by analysing narrative strategies, the characteristic storyline, and selection of messages or values in Fascist educational materials. The starting point of this research will be the introduction of the state textbook into primary schools, because the first concerted attempt to change education in the *Ventennio, la bonifica umana*, or Fascistisation of Italians, began with it, not with Gentile Reform.<sup>68</sup>

The famous Fascist motto, "Fascism makes history, does not write it.",<sup>69</sup> is a lie in the sense that the Fascist regime was more enthusiastic about writing and teaching history in its own right than anyone else.

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<sup>68</sup> Galeotti, *Saluto al Duce!*, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> "Il fascismo fa la storia, non la scrive." Quoted (with translation) from Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, p. 21.

## II. The Structure, Characteristics, Editions, Authors, and Illustrations of the Fascist School textbook

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The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader the Fascist school textbook. Although it was called the *Libro unico*, the primary school textbook that the Fascist regime produced was, in fact, neither a uniform single text nor a single edition. During the *Ventennio*, there were three editions of the Fascist textbook, and in some cases, two (or sometimes three) different versions of the *Libro unico* coexisted in the same edition. Moreover, it is that an identical edition of the *Libro unico* used different graphics, colouring and title lettering on its cover depending on the year or place of publication. Hence, this chapter will provide detailed information regarding the *Libro unico* and clarify any potential confusion. By providing details of the *Libro unico*'s structure, style, variations, themes, authors, and illustrations, as well as the changes made in different editions in this regard, this part of the thesis aims to help the reader to obtain a better understanding of what Fascist textbooks looked like and how they were organised structurally.

### **General structure, division of subjects, editions and variations**

It is difficult to piece together the whole picture regarding all of the *Libro unico*'s volumes and editions. Although we can find basic bibliographical information of most volumes and editions thanks to existing studies of Fascist education, there are still some areas that need to be examined further. Above all, it is unclear exactly how long each edition of the textbook was used, when precisely a new edition was introduced, and when the previous edition was finally discarded: no existing study provides a complete list of the *Libro unico*'s published volumes grade by grade or edition by edition. Even a study which examined a vast amount of ministerial documents and letters regarding Fascist school textbooks does not provide a full picture.<sup>1</sup> Worse still, it appears that there is no library or archive that has fully catalogued the different grades, volumes and editions of the Fascist schoolbook: some books are always missing. Thus, by

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<sup>1</sup> *Il libro per la scuola*, ed. by Ascenzi and Sani.

synthesising bibliographical information from library and archive catalogues and secondary literature, this sub-chapter will reconstruct when the different editions of the *Libro unico*'s were published, how many volumes and different versions existed, and which subjects they were composed of according to the different school grade.

Children in Fascist Italy attended primary school for five years. In the first two years, they were taught using only one volume of the textbook, which contained content regarding phonics, words, sentences, grammar, poems and short stories for the language lesson as well as basic arithmetic (counting and numeracy), song lyrics, prayers, and some reading materials related to hygiene, nature, history, religion and politics. Students in the last two years of primary school had two kinds of the textbook: the *Lecture* (Reading) and the *Sussidiari* (Auxiliary). The former was used in the language and literature class and the latter was used for all other classes and was divided into several parts by subject. Third graders, like junior graders, had an all-encompassing single textbook, but it was internally divided by subject matter which was clarified by the title. In the early 1930s, the different volumes of the *Libro unico* used the following titles:

- '*Il libro della seconda (or II) classe*';
- '*Il libro della terza (or III) classe elementare: letture, religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze*';
- '*Il libro della quarta (or IV) classe elementare: letture*';
- '*Il libro della quarta (or IV) classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze*'.

The reason that the *Libro unico* was not a uniform text was that the Fascist regime published three different versions of the second grade textbook written by different authors and distributed them according to the school's location. Children in schools in remote areas and rural villages were given, *Il libro della seconda classe: scuole rurali*, while pupils in schools in cities, towns, and the rest of the country were provided with one of the two other versions of the book.<sup>2</sup> The book given to students depended on the official textbook distributor in the region or province where the school was located.

Why were there different versions of the Fascist textbook? Why did the regime produce different versions of the *Libro unico* given its name? According to Monica Galfré, many groups and individuals involved in the publishing industry (e.g. pedagogists, educational professionals,

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<sup>2</sup> Dina Bucciarelli-Belardinelli, *Il libro della seconda classe* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1930); Quercia Tanzarella, *Il libro della seconda classe* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1930); Alessandro Marcucci, *Il libro della seconda classe: scuole rurali* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1930)

and government officials in education) had expressed, albeit in a subtle and indirect way, their scepticism and concern regarding the State's monopoly of the school textbook market from the introduction of the *Libro unico*. This was because they largely resented or worried about the suppression of the freedom of teaching and end of the school textbook market due to the government's monopoly. Therefore, as a gesture to appease these grievances, the regime resorted to two solutions. The first was to produce multiple versions of the book, although this was more of a symbolic than a practical gesture. The second solution was to divide the country between major private publishing houses and give them monopolistic (or oligopolistic) rights to print and distribute the *Libro unico* in the assigned business territories. This was a measure to secure a stable income and market share for private publishers in compensation for the loss of revenue for their then obsolete school textbooks. In other words, the State only monopolised the writing of the text and allowed the private sector to continue enjoying economic profit from the business.<sup>3</sup> From this complicated system of circulation, it is clear that the Fascist schoolbook was a product of the regime's eclectic intentions, aspirations, and actions regardless of how successful it was.

In the latter half of the 1930s, the Fascist government revised the *Libro unico*. As a result, the fourth and fifth grade *Sussidiari* were divided into two volumes: one volume covered religion, history and geography, and the other covered arithmetic and science.<sup>4</sup> These versions were produced in 1937, but it seems that the undivided, single volume *Sussidiari*, covering all of the subjects above, was still being published and used in some areas at the end of 1938.<sup>5</sup> This is another reflection of the fact that the business of printing and disseminating the *Libro unico* was divided by geographical area between private publishers considering their market domination.<sup>6</sup> The third grade textbook was also divided into separate volumes. The *Lecture* section became a

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<sup>3</sup> Galfré, *Il regime degli*, pp. 91-93 and 95-97.

<sup>4</sup> *Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937); *Il libro della IV classe elementare: aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937); *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937); *Il libro della V classe elementare: aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937)

<sup>5</sup> One example is *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937). Despite its official place of publication and publisher name, this version was printed in Verona and distributed by Mondadori, one of the biggest publishing houses in Italy. Copies of this textbook are often catalogued as having been 'published in 1938' by some libraries and second-hand book sellers. Thus, this version might have been printed and used in some parts of Italy at least until 1938.

<sup>6</sup> Galfré, *Il regime degli*, pp. 95-102.

separate book in 1935 and a completely new text was written for this edition.<sup>7</sup> The regime also introduced a new auxiliary textbook to the fifth grade syllabus in 1937 which covered the Italian colonies in East Africa.<sup>8</sup> Although the division of subjects was complicated, just a few modifications to the content in all *Sussidiari* books were made (I will discuss this point further below). On the other hand, *Letture* books and the all-in-one texts of first and second grades were overhauled by new authors. As mentioned above, the third grade *Letture* was revised in 1935.<sup>9</sup> *Libro della prima classe* (1935) and *Libro della quinta classe* (1936) were substituted with the new texts as well. The three versions of the *seconda classe* were also replaced by a single text in 1936.<sup>10</sup>

The final editions of Fascist textbooks were made between the end of the 1930s and the early 1940s. This time all volumes of the *Libro unico* were substituted (i.e., newly written) and not amended. The fourth and fifth grade *Sussidiari* remained in two volumes (there was no regional variation of the all-subject books except their covers), but the new edition slightly altered its division of subjects. Geography was moved to the book on arithmetic-science. Instead, a new subject, grammar, formed part of the other *Sussidiari* with religion and history.<sup>11</sup> Changes to the *Letture* and the first and second grade textbooks appear to have been more complicated. New

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<sup>7</sup> Nazareno Padellaro, *Il libro della terza classe elementare: letture* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1935). Only *Letture* part was detached and other subjects of the *Sussidiari* remained in the same volume: *Il libro terza classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1935)

<sup>8</sup> Luigi Filippo De Magistris, *L'impero italiano dell'africa orientale* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937). This book contains history (general history of the region and history of the Italian advance), geography, nature, and anthropology of the eastern Africa.

<sup>9</sup> Chaotically, however, it seems that the first edition of the fifth grader *Letture* kept being printed and used in some provinces until 1938.

<sup>10</sup> The new textbooks mentioned were; Maria Zanetti, *Libro della prima classe* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1935); Alfredo Petrucci, *L'italiano nuovo. Letture per la II classe elementare* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1936); Padellaro, *Il libro della terza*; Francesco Saponi, *Il libro della quinta classe: testo di letture per le alunne. Amor di patria* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1936).

<sup>11</sup> *Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941); *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941); *Il libro della IV classe elementare: aritmetica, geografia, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941); *Il libro della V classe elementare: aritmetica, geografia, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941). Meanwhile, third grade pupils kept using the single volume *Sussidiari* in which a new subject, grammar, was added; *Il libro III classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1939)

textbooks were introduced in 1940 and 1938 for the *prima classe* and the *quarta classe Letture*.<sup>12</sup> However, the regime produced two different textbooks for second grade (1941) and third grade *Lettture* (1939): one was for rural schools (*Il libro dei centri rurali*) and the other was for schools in urban areas (*Il libro dei centri urbani*).<sup>13</sup> The regime quickly abolished the second edition of the fifth grader *Lettture* (1936) and replaced it with a new text in 1939.<sup>14</sup> Oddly enough, this third edition was also quickly discarded and a new version (final) was introduced in 1942. The real problem is the final edition. Although a secondary source vaguely hints that the regime also produced two different versions of *Lettture* for the *quinta classe* in the 1940s, no library, archival catalogue or other secondary source found indicates that a fifth grade textbook for rural schools was produced.<sup>15</sup> More curiously, however, the only existing *quinta classe Letture* title was written for urban areas, '*centri urbani*'.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is unclear whether the regime had initially planned two versions, but only one was produced, or whether the *centri rurali* was also published, but all copies were simply lost.

As seen so far, the *Libro unico* was a complex, confusing, and non-uniform creation despite its name. The history of revisions, fragmented distribution system, constant changes to how subjects were grouped, change of authors, and inconsistent titling<sup>17</sup> are perplexing and have

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<sup>12</sup> Vera Cottarelli Gaiba and Nerina Oddi, *Il libro della prima classe* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1940); Piero Bargellini, *Il libro della IV classe elementare: letture* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1938). Unlike other grades, the fourth grade *Lettture* was not replaced in the mid-1930s.

<sup>13</sup> Pina Ballario, *Quartiere Corridoni: letture per la seconda classe dei centri urbani* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941); Eros Belloni, *Il libro per la seconda classe dei centri rurali* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941); Alfredo Petrucci, *L'aratro e la spada: letture per la terza classe dei centri rurali* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1939); Adele Zanetti and Maria Zanetti, *Patria: letture per la terza classe dei centri urbani* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1939).

<sup>14</sup> Luigi Rinaldi, *Il libro della quinta classe elementare: letture* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1939)

<sup>15</sup> Tracy Koon mentions that the textbooks destined for rural schools were published after 1938, but she does not provide precise bibliographic information on these books and it is unclear whether they were *Lettture* or *Sussidiari* or for which grade they were produced. In addition, she does not specify the source of her information. The accuracy is therefore doubtful; Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> Piero Bargellini, *Lettture per la quinta classe dei centri urbani* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1942)

<sup>17</sup> As we see in the notes above (also refer to Appendix 1 and 2), various ways of titling were confusingly used in the *Libro unico* edition by edition: e.g. terza/quarta/quinta, III/IV/V, '*Il libro della XX classe elementare: letture*', '*Lettture per la XX classe*' etc. This means that the catalogue of the *Libro unico* in library and archival catalogues is somewhat erratic.

hampered the attempt to construct a synthesised bibliographical list of Fascist school textbooks. This subchapter has tried to provide such a list to redress this gap (see Appendix 1 for a clearer list). The next section will examine the content of the *Libro unico*: what was changed, modified, eliminated, and added to Fascist school textbooks in different editions? How different was the *Libro unico* from schoolbooks in the 1920s?

### **Evolution and characteristics of the *Libro unico di Stato***

The *Libro unico* introduced some technical improvements to Italian school textbooks. The first and second grade textbooks, especially the 1930s editions, are attractive in appearance. The vivid colours on pages, stylistic fonts, and eye-catching illustrations are impressive and of a better quality than those in many previous schoolbooks.<sup>18</sup> The *Libro unico* also clarified that it was meant for school lessons. Before the *Libro unico*, it was often difficult to distinguish between schoolbooks in Italy: the titles of some books did not indicate whether they were textbooks, and others provided no indication regarding for which grade or age group of children they were suitable. The only source that provided information regarding the textbooks and suitable level of reader were the commercial catalogues distributed by publishers. The Fascist textbook made things easier in this sense. All volumes of the *Libro unico*, regardless of their subjects, editions or regional variations, made it explicitly clear in their titles and on the cover pages that they were textbooks for a certain grade of student.

However, acknowledging that there were some technical improvements does not mean that the Fascist textbook introduced significant innovations in terms of content. Rather, it is conceivable that the *Libro unico* referred to and even imitated earlier textbooks in various aspects, which is particularly evident in case of the history textbook. A good example is a history textbook called, *Uomini e fatti della storia d'Italia* (1925).<sup>19</sup> Comparing this book with the *Libro unico*'s history section, the similarities are clear in terms of the page-layout, selection (and arrangement) of topics, and titles of some (sub)chapters. More importantly, the two textbooks often share similar historical views and adopt the same narrative device. For instance, both define the Middle Ages

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<sup>18</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, p. 76

<sup>19</sup> Alarico Elia, *Uomini e fatti della storia d'Italia: dal 476 ad oggi e letture storiche per la quinta classe elementare* (Palermo: IRES, 1925). This textbook was first published in 1912 and was one of the most widely used history books at primary schools in Sicily. It was revised several times and its last edition (1925) embraced significant elements of Fascist ideology or a pro-Fascist stance.

as lasting from 476 (the Fall of the Roman Empire) to 1492 (Columbus's arrival in America), and negatively appraised feudalism:

"The Middle Ages begin in the year 476 A.D., the date of the fall of the Western [Roman] Empire, and continue until 1492, when the Genoese Christopher Columbus discovered America."<sup>20</sup>

"[...] The Western Roman Empire fell [...] in 476 A.D [...]. On that date, medieval history [...] begins."<sup>21</sup>

"With the discovery of America, the modern era begins."<sup>22</sup>

"[...] the powerful feudal lords ruled over impoverished villages and exercised a real brigandage over the surrounding lands. The peasants [...] suffered the exploitation of their cruel lords for centuries without law that would protect their possessions, dignity and lives."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Il Medio Evo incomincia dall'anno 476 dopo Cristo, data della caduta dell'impero d'Occidente, e va sino al 1492, quando il genovese Cristoforo Colombo scoprì l'America."; Ibid., p. 5

<sup>21</sup> "[...] l'impero romano d'Occidentale crollò [...] nel 476 d. C. [...]. Con tale data si [...] dare inizio alla storia medioevale."; *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937), p. 91. As this thesis will frequently quote from the history section of the *Libro unico*, I will hereafter use abbreviated forms for the quoted volumes and editions, such as: *Libro III classe* (1931)[*Il libro della III classe elementare: letture, religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1931)], *Libro III classe* (1937)[*Il libro della III classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937)], *Libro III classe* (1941)[*Il libro III classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941)], *Libro IV classe* (1932)[*Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1932)], *Libro IV classe* (1937)[*Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937)], *Libro IV classe* (1941)[*Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941)], *Libro V classe* (1931)[*Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, artmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1931)], *Libro V classe* (1937)[*Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1937)], *Libro V classe* (1941)[*Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, grammatica, storia* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941)]. Although the *Libro unico* used both styles of numbering (i.e., terza, quarta, quinta and III, IV, V) in its title, I uniformly adopt the latter in the abbreviations for convenience. The abbreviation of the *Libro unico*'s other books (*Sussidiari-aritmetica and scienze, Letture*, etc.) will be stated when used.

<sup>22</sup> "Dalla scoperta dell'America si fa cominciare l'evo moderno."; Ibid., p. 126



"And when you think that feudal lords could also have the right to put their subjects to death, it is easy to understand how miserable and woeful [...] the condition of the peasants must have been."<sup>24</sup>

Also, both textbooks commonly include the House of Savoy in the history of medieval Italy in order to emphasise the aristocratic family's *Italianità*, and recount lengthy stories of World War I heroes which are followed by the story of the rise of Fascism in a bid to link Fascism with patriotic heroism:<sup>25</sup>

"The origins of the Savoy were not well defined; but there is no doubt that it [the Savoy] is one of the oldest [noble families] in Italy and in Europe."<sup>26</sup>

"In Piedmont, [...] a glorious and ancient family of feudal lords, the Savoy, for whom Providence reserved the task of unifying Italy."<sup>27</sup>

The Fascist school textbook was not completely different than its predecessors. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the *Libro unico* had its own characteristics and idiosyncrasies as the regime sought to create a distinct school textbook. So, what were the main differences between *Libro unico*'s history section and its predecessors published before 1930? There are many to discuss and a more meticulous analysis of the idiosyncrasies of the *Libro unico*'s historiography will be carried out in the following chapters, but here I will present one example. As explained in the Introduction, one of the points with which the Fascist government was most discontent in the

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<sup>23</sup> "[...] i prepotenti signorotti dominavano i poveri villaggi ed esercitavano un vero brigantaggio sulle terre circostanti. I contadini [...] subirono per più secoli lo sfruttamento dei crudeli padroni, senza leggi che li garantissero negli averi, nell'onore e nella vita."; Elia, *Uomini e fatti*, p. 10

<sup>24</sup> "E quando si pensi che i feudatari potevano avere anche il diritto di mettere a morte i loro soggetti, ben si comprende come dovessero essere misere e dolorose [...] le condizioni dei contadini."; and *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 102

<sup>25</sup> The war hero stories in both texts are too long to quote here, but can be found in Elia, *Uomini e fatti*, pp. 143-53; *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 162-71; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 108-17.

<sup>26</sup> "Le origini della Casa Savoia non sono bene accertate; ma non v'ha dubbio che essa è una delle più antiche d'Italia e d'Europa."; Elia, *Uomini e fatti*, p. 29

<sup>27</sup> "In Piemonte, [...] una gloriosa ed antica famiglia di feudatari, quella dei Savoia, alla quale la Provvidenza riservava il compito di unificare l'Italia."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 118

existing history texts (up to 1929) was the lack of historical accounts that developed a close connection between the Great War and the rise of Fascism. Some textbooks finished their narratives with the end of the war and others were silent about Interventionism in 1914-15 and its relationship with early Fascist leaders.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the regime thought that explanations of the consequences of the war in many textbooks were inappropriate. As they included no complaints regarding the Allies' 'unfair' treatment of Italy after the conflict and failed to explain how and why Italy fell into disorder despite the victory which eventually led to the 'heroic' Fascist revolution.<sup>29</sup> Predictably, the *Libro unico* 'corrected' this problem:

"Benito Mussolini [...] had championed our intervention against Austria. [...] On 15 November 1914 he founded his newspaper for the battle, the *Popolo d'Italia*, and engaged in the brave struggle for Intervention [...]. Benito Mussolini is hailed by us as one of the decisive factors of our war and our victory."<sup>30</sup>

"In 1915 roused by the Interventionist propaganda of Benito Mussolini, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Filippo Corridoni- [Italy] entered the battle against Austria [...]."<sup>31</sup>

"[...] while we were denied Dalmatia which had been promised to us by England and France with the Treaty of London [...]. Our former Allies also tried to block the union of the most Italian city of Fiume with Italy."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Eugenio Oberti, *Piccola storia della grande guerra: libro per le scuole e per le famiglie* (Florence: Bemporad, 1919); Luigi Bertelli, *Un secolo di storia italiana, 1815-1918* (Florence: Bemporad, 1920); Luigi Bertelli, *Come l'Italia diventò nostra: libro di storia patria per la 3<sup>a</sup> classe elementare* (Florence: Bemporad, 1924); Enrico Bottini Massa, *La nostra Italia: libro di storia per le scuole tecniche complementari, vol.3 dall'anno 1492 ai nostri giorni* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1921); Elia, *Uomini e fatti*.

<sup>29</sup> Bertelli, *Un secolo di storia*; Bertelli, *Come l'Italia diventò*; Bottini Massa, *La nostra Italia*; Oberti, *Piccola storia*. Meanwhile, Alarico Elia's textbook briefly mentioned disorder in post-war Italy but did not blame the Allies for 'betraying' Italy; Elia, *Uomini e fatti*, pp. 149-51.

<sup>30</sup> "Benito Mussolini [...] aveva propugnato il nostro l'intervento contro l'Austria. [...] Il 15 novembre 1914 egli fondò il suo giornale di battaglia, Il Popolo d'Italia, ed impegnò la strenua lotta per l'intervento [...]. Benito Mussolini va salutato da noi come uno dei fattori decisivi della nostra guerra e della nostra vittoria."; *Libro III classe* (1931), pp. 316-17; *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 166-67.

<sup>31</sup> "Nel 1915 -infiammata dalla propaganda interventista di Benito Mussolini, Gabriele D'Annunzio e Filippo Corridoni- [Italia] scese in lotta contro l'Austria [...]; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> "[...] mentre ci fu negata la Dalmazia che ci era stata promessa dall'Inghilterra e dalla Francia col trattato di Londra [...]. I nostri ex alleati tentarono anche d'impedire l'unione all'Italia dell'italianissima città di Fiume."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 181.

"[...] instead, some painful years followed, in which Italy seemed condemned to end up miserably in the horrors of the most unbridled anarchy."<sup>33</sup>

Arguably, as mentioned above, the evolvement of or changes to the content of school textbooks continued during the different editions of the *Libro unico*. In terms of the *Sussidiari* books, the first revised edition from late 1930s was principally to update the Fascist government's achievements and new policies. Hence, just a few pages or phrases were added to the history and geography sections, and the texts of other subjects were almost unchanged. The long new chapter on the Ethiopian War and Mussolini's declaration of the Fascist Empire (1936) was one of the additions to the history text.<sup>34</sup> However, not all of the parts added in this edition were simply to bring the text up to the date with recent events in Fascist Italy. The late 1930s edition, for example, explicitly stated that "the Risorgimento began" at the dawn of the eighteenth century<sup>35</sup> and inserted a paragraph to recount the neo-Guelph's contribution to the Risorgimento.<sup>36</sup> Both parts were not in the earlier edition. They were added because a number of academic arguments (in this case the '*Settecento Risorgimento*' thesis and the pro-Catholic interpretation of the neo-Guelph movement) enhanced their influence on historical studies and consequently on history education, which was closely associated with Gioacchino Volpe and Cesare Maria De Vecchi's views of history and their power in academic circles.<sup>37</sup>

A more significant and larger scale revision was made in the 1940s edition. Yet, despite the revision, the general improvement of the quality in this edition is doubtful from aesthetic, technical and pedagogical points of view. The quality of the cover design of the *Sussidiari* deteriorated (see Appendix 2) and the layout of some pages was bad: the font used was too small and there were many severely crowded pages, especially in the fifth grade textbook. Further, the abundance of photographs in previous editions disappeared, and (almost) all were replaced with achromatic illustrations, many of which were poorly drawn. Pedagogically, the *Libro unico* from the 1940s was far from an improvement. The account of history became even

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<sup>33</sup> "[...] seguirono invece alcuni tristissimi anni, nei quali l'Italia parve condannata a finire miseramente negli orrori della più sfrenata anarchia."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 194.

<sup>34</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 177-80; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 199-204.

<sup>35</sup> "s'iniziò allora il risorgimento."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.

<sup>37</sup> For further discussion of this point, please see the paragraphs attached to note no. 65-67, 72-76, 83-87 in Chapter III and to note no. 61 in Chapter IV of this thesis.

more Italo-centric, belligerent, and propagandistic. For instance, the edition removed all references to ancient civilisations before Rome (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Phoenicia, Persia and Greece), which had occupied dozens of pages in the 1930s' fourth grade book.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the 1940s textbook more frequently cited words relating to war or military virtues than the previous editions,<sup>39</sup> and extended the accounts on Fascist Italy's recent wars by adding the intervention in the Spanish civil war, the annexation of Albania, and the Second World War:

"Numerous legions of Fascist volunteers landed in Spain and contributed to Franco's victory in a decisive way."<sup>40</sup>

"Meanwhile on 10th June 1940, Italy [...] entered the war alongside friend and ally Germany. The Duce, from the balcony of *Palazzo Venezia*, provided Italians with a single rallying cry: 'Win!'."<sup>41</sup>

Further, more blatant praise of Mussolini can be found in the 1940s edition:

"Then, Benito Mussolini –the man sent by God for the renewal of civilised society- thought saving the Fatherland [...]."<sup>42</sup>

"The Duce was the supreme mastermind of this prodigious enterprise for which [he] was decorated with the highest military honour."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 66–96. For more about this point, see the section 'Pre-history, antiquity and the Roman era' (and its footnotes) in Chapter V.

<sup>39</sup> See Table 1 in the section 'The Risorgimento, Liberal Italy, the Great War, and Fascism' in Chapter V

<sup>40</sup> "Numerose legioni di volontari fascisti sbarcarono in terra di Spagna e contribuirono in modo decisivo alla vittoria di Franco."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 189. Details of Italy's involvement in the Spanish civil war and the invasion of Albania are also found in the third grade's text; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 126–27.

<sup>41</sup> "Intanto 10 giugno 1940, l'Italia [...] entrava in guerra accanto alla Germania amica ed alleata. Il Duce, dal balcone di Palazzo Venezia, dava agli Italiani una sola parola d'ordine: 'Vincere!'."; *Ibid.*, p. 191

<sup>42</sup> "Allora Benito Mussolini –l'Uomo inviato da Dio per il rinnovamento della società civile- pensò di salvare la Patria [...]; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 116

<sup>43</sup> "Il Duce fu l'artefice supremo di questa prodigiosa impresa per la quale è stato decorato della più alta onorificenza militare."; *Ibid.*, p. 118.

"The Duce works for everyone and with everyone; he provides us with an example by moving the difficult matters of government to, threshing work, to the laying of rocks or boundary stones, which mark the beginning of new works or the opening of new roman roads."<sup>44</sup>

Lastly, the 1940s *Libro unico* featured a few racist and anti-Semitic elements compared to the previous editions, which had barely discussed the issue. In the last edition of the history text, the more biological racist term *razza* (race) was used instead of the cultural terminology of ethnicity, *stirpe* (stock),<sup>45</sup> and one short, but undeniably anti-Semitic statement was also inserted:

"That Government [the Soviet government], dominated by men of the Jewish race, tried to extend its rule of disorder throughout the world at any cost."<sup>46</sup>

Although the changes described above lessened the aesthetic, technical and pedagogical quality of the *Libro unico*, for the regime, there was a justifiable and practical reason for the cramped page-layout and the reduction of photographs. It was to consume less paper and ink in accordance with the economic policy of autarchy. Indeed, adding up figures of all three grades' history sections, we can find that the *Libro unico*'s total pages were reduced from 328 in the late 1930s to 263 in the 1940s<sup>47</sup> and the number of printed photos was reduced from 76 in the late 1930s to 42 in the 1940s.<sup>48</sup> In terms of content, such alterations in the last edition were likely to

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<sup>44</sup> "Il Duce lavora per tutti e con tutti; Egli ci dà l'esempio passando dalle difficili cure del Governo, al lavoro della trebbiatrice e alla posa di pietre o di cippi, che segnano l'inizio di nuove opere o l'apertura di nuove strade romane."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 194

<sup>45</sup> For more discussions of Fascist racism and its influence on the *Libro unico*, see this thesis's paragraphs related to footnote no. 30 in Chapter IV and the ones associated with note no. 56-66 in Chapter V.

<sup>46</sup> "Tale [Soviet] Governo, dominato da uomini di razza ebraica, ha tentato di estendere ad ogni costo il suo dominio di disordine in tutto il mondo."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 188

<sup>47</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 61-180; *Libro IV classe* (1932/7), pp. 59-151; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-205; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 69-127; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 126-234; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-211. Although the 1940's *IV classe* increased its extent, we should consider that this edition covered a longer period (from pre-history to 1492) than its predecessor (from pre-history to A.D. 476).

<sup>48</sup> Many illustrations in the late 1930s' textbooks, which were not counted here, were photographic reproductions of famous epic paintings (e.g. Carlo Ademollo's *L'incontro di Garibaldi e Vittorio Emanuele II*

have been directed by the regime's intention to consolidate its Fascistisation drive. Fascism's priority in education was not to provide children with a balanced knowledge of history but to instil a Fascist world view and concept of history. Therefore, the Fascist authorities did not see the content changes in the 1940s edition as a reduction in quality. Rather, they arguably saw this edition as an improvement in the sense that it enhanced 'appropriate' political lessons and the teaching of militaristic virtues.

In fact, apart from political messages and Fascist values, there are some changes that could be seen as improvements to the *Libro unico* in terms of the pedagogic methodology included. First, the 1940s history text occasionally quoted from academic historians like Gioacchino Volpe, Ettore Fabietti and Giuseppe Fanciulli, although references to the sources were not included.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, under the heading of 'Exercises', students were provided with questions about what they have been taught or were required to conduct tasks at the end of each chapter.<sup>50</sup>

We have hitherto examined the *Libro unico*'s different editions, structure, volumes, characteristics, and evolution. To better understand how Fascist textbooks were produced, the next section will examine authors, illustrators of the *Libro unico* and the illustrations used therein.

### **Authors, illustrators and illustrations**

Since the first two grades and the *Lecture* books were frequently changed or substituted, a number of people were involved in writing them. The authors were: Dina Bucciarelli-Belardinelli (*I* and *II classe* 1930), Quercia Tanzarella (*II* 1930), Alessandro Marcucci (*II-scuole rurali* 1930), Grazia Deledda (*III* 1930), Angiolo Silvio Novaro (*IV* 1930), Roberto Forges Davanzati (*V* 1930), Maria Zanetti (*I* 1935 and *III-centri urbani* 1939), Adele Zanetti (*III-centri urbani* 1939 with Maria), Alfredo Petrucci (*II* 1936 and *III-centri rurali* 1939), Nazareno Padellaro (*III* 1935), Francesco Saponi (*V* 1936), Vera Cottarelli Gaiba and Nerina Oddi (*I* 1941), Pina Ballario (*II-centri urbani* 1941), Eros Belloni (*II-centri rurali* 1941), Piero Bargellini (*IV* 1938 and *V-urbani* 1942), and Luigi Rinaldi (*V* 1939).

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*a Teano*). Therefore, if such illustrations were included, the decline in the number of photographs between the two editions seemed a more drastic measure.

<sup>49</sup> For examples of these quotations, see *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 121, p. 123, p. 178, pp. 182-83.

<sup>50</sup> However, these questions or tasks were often politically motivated. For example, one Exercise asked pupils how many Fascist martyrs there were in their city or region; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 183.

These authors were writers (Deledda, Novaro, Petrucci, Bargellini, Maria and Adele Zanetti, Belloni, Davanzati, Saporì, and Rinaldi), educators (Bucciarelli-Belardinelli, Marcucci, Padellaro, Cottarelli Gaiba and Oddi) or both (Tanzarella, Bargellini and Ballario). Perhaps the most famous of them was Grazia Deledda, a Sardinian writer and winner of Nobel Prize for Literature in 1926. Novaro and Petrucci were also well-known literary figures. Angiolo Silvio Novaro was a notable poet, writer and became a member of the Italian Academy in 1929. Alfredo Petrucci was a renowned art historian (an expert on engravings), poet and writer. Alessandro Marcucci and Nazareno Padellaro were pedagogists and high ranking officials in the Ministry of Education. In particular, Marcucci was an ardent supporter of the introduction of the State school textbooks and an enthusiastic activist for education of peasants and the lower classes. Piero Bargellini was the chief editor of a pro-Catholic literary journal from the early 1920s and worked as the central inspector of the Ministry of National Education in the late 1930s. After the *Ventennio*, he became a Christian Democrat politician and was elected as mayor of Florence in 1966. Bucciarelli-Belardinelli and Tanzarella were school inspectors and the latter was a popular children's author. Many of these authors also wrote childhood education books or school textbooks before the *Libro unico*, and Novaro and Tanzarella had worked with the publisher Mondadori for a long time.<sup>51</sup>

However, among these seventeen authors, only two were politically committed Fascists: Roberto Forges Davanzati and Francesco Saporì. Forges Davanzati was a broadcaster, writer, political commentator and high-profile politician in Fascist Italy. He was the presenter of a widely-listened to political radio programme, *Cronache del regime* and became a member of the Fascist Grand Council and a senator before his death in 1936. Saporì was a writer and art critic. During the *Ventennio*, he was a fervent promoter of Fascist culture and the secretary general of the Fascist Syndicate of Authors and Writers, but his Fascist activities were forgotten after 1945.<sup>52</sup> This is another example illustrating that the regime was willing to compromise for practical reasons. Although it decided to monopolise production of the primary school textbooks, Mussolini's regime did not exclusively select politically faithful Fascists as authors, and offered

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<sup>51</sup> The information on these authors can be found in Galfré, *Il regime degli*, pp. 93-94; Sabina Pavone, '236. Libreria dello Stato' in *TESEO '900: Editori scolastico-educativi del primo Novecento* (Milan: Bibliografica, 2008), pp. 320-22; Renato Bertacchini, 'Bargellini, Piero' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 34 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana, 1988) [hereafter; *DBI*, vol. (year)]

<sup>52</sup> *Historical Dictionary*, p. 229 (Forges Davanzati). On Saporì, see <http://siusa.archivi.beniculturali.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=prodpersona&Chiave=46717&RicProgetto=personalita> (13 June 2016)

work to any intellectual, if not an obvious anti-Fascist, who was ready to cooperate. Therefore, the reality of 'totalitarian' rule in Fascist Italy was not always unilateral or repressive.

The *Sussidiari* texts also had many authors, but they were changed less considering the number of subjects that the books dealt with. The authors were: Angelo Zammarchi and Cesare Angelini (religion -all grades and editions), Gaetano Scorza (arithmetic -all grades of the early and mid-1930s editions), Luigi De Marchi (geography -all grades of the early and mid-1930s editions), Alessandro Brizi, Ferdinando Lori, Nicola Parravano, Luigi Simonetta and Lino Vaccari (science -IV and V classe of the early and mid-1930s editions), Luigi Filippo De Magistris (*L'impero italiano*), Ottorino Bertolini (history -III classe of all 1930s edition), Roberto Paribeni (history -IV classe of all 1930s edition), Alfonso Gallo (history -V classe of all 1930s edition), Ezio Bonomi (history, grammar, geography, arithmetic -III classe of the 1940s edition), Armando Armando (history, grammar, geography, arithmetic and science -IV classe of the 1940s edition), Carmelo Cottone (history, grammar, geography, arithmetic and science -V classe of the 1940s edition), Maria Mascalchi (arithmetic and science -IV & V classe of the late 1930s edition) and Mario Mazza (science with Armando -IV classe of the 1940s edition).

Like most of the *Letture* authors, these writers were functionaries rather than faithful Fascists. Zammarchi and Angelini were both Catholic priests: Zammarchi was a bishop, theologian and founder of a publishing house, *La Scuola* in Brescia, and Angelini was the rector of a seminary in Pavia and a literary critic. Scorza (mathematician), De Marchi (geographer), Brizi (economist), Lori (electronic engineer), Parravano (chemist), Simonetta (physician, medical scientist), Vaccari (botanist), De Magistris (geographer) and Mascalchi (a maths teacher at a *liceo classico* in Turin) were scholarly experts and taught at universities or higher education institutions.<sup>53</sup> De Marchi, Brizi and Simonetta were nominated Senators by the Fascist government, but this was due to their professional merits and reputation, not to their political allegiance.<sup>54</sup>

More important for this study are the authors of the history section. In the 1930s edition, its authors were historians or at least experts in a closely associated subject. Ottorino Bertolini was a historian and medievalist, who specialised in Byzantium and the Lombard kingdom in Italy. Roberto Paribeni was a well-known archaeologist, antiquarian and historian of ancient Rome. He was one of the leading members of the *Istituto di Studi Romani* (Institute of Roman Studies) and

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<sup>53</sup> Galfré, *Il regime degli*, pp. 93-94; S. Pavone, '236. Libreria'; Maria Cristina Morandini, 'Fascismo e libro di stato: Il caso dei sussidiari', in *TESEO '900*, pp. lv-lxxiv.

<sup>54</sup> To find out more information on Brizi, De Marchi and Simonetta in the Senate, refer to [http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/a\\_f?OpenPage](http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/a_f?OpenPage) (18 June 2016)



was appointed director of Antiquity and Fine Arts (*l'Antichità e Belle Arti*) in 1928. Alfonso Gallo was a palaeographer and professor at the University of Rome. Paribeni and Gallo were contributors to the *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Italian Encyclopaedia) and Gallo also wrote some educational books commissioned by the Fascist youth organisation.<sup>55</sup> Despite their willingness to participate in the regime's cultural or educational project, however, none of the authors were involved in parliamentary or party politics during the *Ventennio*.

Likewise, the authors of the 1940s *Sussidiari* texts were indifferent to Fascist politics. Yet the difference is that they, unlike their predecessors, were neither historians nor scholarly experts in any of the textbook's subjects. Bonomi and Armando were young intellectuals and writers. They wrote a few books for the regime (mainly related to educational topics) and became productive authors of school textbooks after the *Ventennio*. Interestingly, in 1943 the Allied Military Command commissioned Bonomi, together with Zammarchi and Angelini, to write a new textbook which reused many parts of the 1940s *Libro unico*.<sup>56</sup> Armando was a university lecturer for many years but he was better known as the founder and chief editor of a notable publishing house, *Armando Editore*, which produced and translated various important books in psychology, pedagogy, sociology and the humanities from the 1950s onwards.<sup>57</sup> Mario Mazza was a zealous Catholic educator and one of the founders of the Italian Catholic Scouts movement (*l'Associazione Scautista Cattolica Italiana*). When the regime sought to ban the Catholic Scouts at the end of the 1920s, Mazza chose to collaborate with the *Opra Nazionale Balilla* hoping that this could save the Catholic youth organisation.<sup>58</sup> Carmelo Cottone was more involved in Fascist education. He began his career as a schoolteacher in Sardinia and later became a government education official in Rome and the central inspector of the Ministry of National Education in 1942.<sup>59</sup>

As mentioned above, Bonomi, Armando and Cottone wrote all of the subjects (except religion) for each grade of the 1940s *Sussidiari*, but they were not experts in any of the subjects covered.

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<sup>55</sup> Cinzio Violante, 'Bertolini, Ottolino' in *DBI*, vol. 34 (1988); Andrea Paribeni, 'Paribeni, Roberto' in *DBI*, vol. 81 (2014); Arthurs, *Excavating modernity*, p. 85 (on Paribeni); Eliana Fileri, 'Gallo, Alfonso' in *DBI*, vol. 51 (1998)

<sup>56</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale*, pp. 108 and 114

<sup>57</sup> Elena Zizioli, *Armando Armando: un pedagogista editore* (Rome: Anicia, 2011)

<sup>58</sup> Vincenzo Schirripa, 'Mazza, Mario' in *DBI*, vol. 72 (2008)

<sup>59</sup> Salvatore Martini, 'Cottone fu fascista? Il caso spacca in due il consiglio comunale', *La Nuova Sardegna*, 23 May 2013 (Nuoro edition)

Consequently, it was not surprising that the 1940s text contained more factual errors than the previous editions. For example, the fourth grade history text incorrectly cited an Ostrogoth king called Totila as a king of the Lombards,<sup>60</sup> and erroneously quoted Petrarch's famous verse as if it was Dante.<sup>61</sup> The same book also incorrectly stated that Dante was a Ghibelline.<sup>62</sup>

Why did the Fascist government choose writers who were less experienced and non-experts for the new edition of the *Libro unico*? No documentary evidence was found in this regard, but it is not difficult to assume that the regime might have envisaged that non-specialised and less experienced writers were easier to manipulate as it wished. In other words, such authors would have been expected to be less reluctant to incorporate the regime's demands into their writing at the expense of rigorous academic standards, which became a desirable attitude in order to inject more ideological-political elements into the reduced number of pages.

Lastly we will examine the *Libro unico*'s illustrators and illustrations. The known illustrators of Fascist school textbooks were: Pio Pullini, Carlo Testi, Angelo Della Torre, Bruno Bramanti, Angelo Canevari, Sarino Papalia, Enrico Pinochi, Piero Bernardini, Roberto Sgrilli, Mario Pompei, Bruno Angoletta, Bepi Fabiano, and Duilio Cambellotti.<sup>63</sup> Among these illustrators and artists,

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<sup>60</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 194

<sup>61</sup> "[...] il bel paese che Appennin parte, il mar circonda, e l'Alpe."; Ibid., p. 218 (for the translation in English, see Chapter IV note n.38).

<sup>62</sup> "[...] ma poi coloro che come lui avevano fede nell'Imperatore furono cacciati da Firenze, in esilio."; Ibid. At the end of the thirteenth century, the Florentine Guelphs were divided into two factions: the black Guelphs (guelfi neri) who were loyal to the Pope and the white Guelphs (guelfi bianchi) who wanted more independence from the papacy for their city. Dante Alighieri and his family belonged to the white Guelphs. For more about Dante's life, see Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Dante Alighieri' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2015), or <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/dante/> (20 June 2016)

<sup>63</sup> These are the illustrators;

*Libro I classe*: Pullini (Belardinelli's text), Pinochi (Zanetti's), Sgrilli (Gaiba and Oddi's)

*Libro II*: Pullini (Belardinelli's), Cambellotti (Marcucci's), Pompei (Tanzarella's), Bernardini (Petrucchi's and Belloni's), Angoletta (Ballario's)

*Libro III*: Pullini (Deledda's, *Lettture* -Petrucchi's), Testi (*Lettture* -Padellaro's, *Sussidiari* in the late 1930s), Pompei (*Lettture* -Zanetti's)

*Libro IV*: Bramanti (*Lettture* -Novaro's), Della Torre (*Lettture* -Bargellini's), Testi (*Sussidiari* in the late 1930s), Pullini (all *Sussidiari* in the 1940s)

Pullini was the most active participant in the regime's projects. He was commissioned by the regime or the Fascist party to decorate several public buildings. His best known works in this period were the fresco mural and huge scale pictures in the Fascist party's local headquarters in Rovigo and Ancona respectively. Yet his collaboration with the regime was forgotten or morally pardoned thanks to the sarcastic drawings of the Nazis and Fascists that he produced during the German occupation of Rome. Della Torre was a painter, graphic designer, and theatre designer. He designed commemorative postal stamps for the regime and the royal family, and engaged in various restoration projects (theatres, public buildings and churches). Bernardini was an artist, illustrator, and cartoonist. He contributed to many journals, books, and magazines, and also illustrated for commercial advertisements. After the Fascist era, he produced bestselling picture books for children. Pompei was an illustrator, set designer, cartoonist, broadcaster and writer of children's plays. He began his career working for a puppet theatre and a ballet company. During the *Ventennio*, he made his name by writing a musical play for children and became a radio broadcaster of a children's programme. His career in children's literature and media continued in the post-war era. Cambellotti was a sculptor, painter, illustrator, and set designer. He was a well-known illustrator for children's books and cinema posters, and highly regarded as a xylographer. Della Torre was his pupil at art school.<sup>64</sup>

In some cases, especially the 1930s' *Sussidiari* books, the illustrator's name was absent. The reason was obvious: most of the subjects in *Sussidiari* did not need new illustrations. In fact, the 1930s' religious text filled almost all of its images with famous religious paintings by artists such as Guido Reni, Fra Angelico and Paolo Veronese. The geography section reprinted numerous photographs and maps produced by the Institute LUCE (*L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa*), the *Fratelli Alinari* Foundation and cartographic societies. Even the science section in the 1930s edition mostly employed photos and rarely used illustrations which had been previously published in other illustrated science books. The history section was not different. The 1930s

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*Libro V: Testi (Sussidiari in the late 1930s), Papalia (all Sussidiari in the 1940s), Canevari (Letture - Rinaldi's), Della Torre (Letture -Bargellini's), Fabiano (Letture -Rinaldi's), Testi (Letture - Saporì's)*

For the full list of illustrators, see Appendix 1.

<sup>64</sup> Antonello Nave, *Pio Pullini: un pittore riscoperto* (Rome: Armando, 2001); Paola Pallottino, 'Bernardini, Piero' in *DBI*, vol. 34 (1988); Rossana Bossaglia, 'Cambellotti, Duilio' in *DBI*, vol. 17 (1974); <http://www.onpmi.org/2013/10/angelo-della-torre-via-crucis/> (for Angelo Della Torre, 20 June 2016); <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-pompei/> (for Pompei, 20 June 2016)

history text largely used photographs of historical monuments and sites, museum pieces, epic paintings and engravings, maps, and portraits of national heroes. Therefore, in the 1930s *Sussidiari* books, there were few images which explicitly conveyed Fascist messages, except for the chapters on Fascism and Fascist Italy.<sup>65</sup>

Yet this tendency changed in the 1940s edition. On the whole, the use of photographic images decreased and illustrated images replaced them in the *Sussidiari* books. The fourth grade history section was particularly noticeable in this regard. The 1940s *quarta classe* history did not contain a single photo and instead used only hand-drawn illustrations, most of which were colourless or monochromatic. Such a reduction of photos was presumably due to the regime's policy of autarchy as explained above. However, there may be another motivation behind this change. Using hand-drawn illustrations can provide an advantage: the illustrator can design whatever his or her employer wants. From the regime's perspective, this meant that it became easier for the textbook to exhibit cult images of the *Duce*, which were difficult to find among photographs. Indeed, the 1940s fifth grader featured an illustrated portrait of Mussolini in which a gigantic *Duce* in uniform is standing and looking forward heroically against the background of a map of the Mediterranean and East Africa (Appendix 3).<sup>66</sup> Once again, it is conceivable from this change of illustrations that the Fascist government attempted to fortify the Fascistisation of education by prioritising its ideological messages over the didactic quality in the *Libro unico*'s later edition. By the same token, we can see such a bid to strengthen Fascistisation in the textbook from the fact that the 1940s' fifth grader history displayed the evolution of rifles and military fire arms in illustration, which was entirely irrelevant to the content (Appendix 3).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The only exception is the image of Caesar crossing the Rubicon in which the Roman general's appearance is like Mussolini's: a stocky bald man with a large square jaw and large flaring eyes (Appendix 3). However, this image was not a new creation for the Fascist textbook, but an illustration from a successful popular history book, Francesco Bertolini's *Storia di Roma*. Maybe someone discovered Caesar's resemblance to Mussolini in this engraving and chose to insert it in the *Libro unico*. The *Libro unico*'s history section also adopted some other illustrations from the same book. For the image of Caesar in the *Libro unico* and the original source, see *Libro IV classe* (1932), p. 129 and Francesco Bertolini, *Storia di Roma: dalle origini italiane sino alla caduta dell'Impero d'Occidente*, illust. by Lodovico Pogliaghi (Milan: Treves, 1890), p. 329.

<sup>66</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 186; this illustration did not feature in the previous editions.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 152, 158, 166, and 193.

## Conclusion

The Fascist government ambitiously launched the State school textbook in order to accelerate the speed of its project, *la bonifica umana*. However, the regime never succeeded in creating a completely uniform, entirely original and purely Fascistised textbook. From its first edition, as demonstrated in this chapter, the *Libro unico* was confusingly produced in different versions and frequently changed its selection of subjects. The Fascist textbook still encompassed various elements of the previous schoolbooks: the selection of topics, page-layout, titling, narrative tactics, periodisations, images, and messages etc. In addition, the regime's failure to complete the Fascitisation and simplification of the textbook is also evident in the production process and the selection of authors. With the introduction of the *Libro unico*, the Fascist government could monopolise the textbook authorship, but it had to yield the right to print and distribute the book to private publishing companies. The regime also opted for functionary intellectuals as authors rather than convinced Fascists which meant that many already established educators and textbook writers (another example of continuity with the Liberal period) contributed to the *Libro unico*.

Nevertheless, the *Libro unico*'s flawed Fascistisation does not mean that the textbook was no different than its predecessors or that the regime made no effort to differentiate it. Rather, the regime sought to promote Fascist ideology and morality in the textbook in various ways (by injecting more militarism, Italo-centricity and cult of the leader, changing authors, and inserting more propagandistic images etc.) which resulted in certain developments, in a positive and a negative sense, to the *Libro unico*'s various editions.

In short, the *Libro unico di Stato* was eclectic. It inherited many elements from pre-existing cultural, didactical and academic products, and at the same time reflected Fascism's idiosyncrasies. This dissertation, as a study of Fascist history education, will illustrate the hybridity of the *Libro unico*'s history section. For this purpose, the following chapters will dissect the Fascist textbook's historical arguments, use of metaphor, language, narrative strategies, rhetoric, thematic concerns, and periodisation not only by closely reading its history section, but by also investigating Liberal and Fascist Italy's discourse, conceptions and use of history in a broader perspective.

### III. Fascist National Identity, History Education and the School Textbook

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Historian Emilio Gentile once said that some historians believed that Fascist Italy was “*un regno della parola* (a kingdom of the word)” because the Fascists “spoke [a lot] but thought little.”<sup>1</sup> This critique points out Fascism’s lack of ideological coherence and scrupulously planned policy. Such lack of coherence, however, does not inevitably mean that the Fascist regime lacked its own goal or blueprint for Italy’s future. Conversely, Fascism had a fervent desire to transform Italy into a fully unified nation, a politically, militarily and economically strong imperial superpower, and a modernised country. Some studies have already demonstrated this in Fascist culture.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as Joshua Arthurs argues, to dismiss the regime’s plethora of words as nothing but theatrical propaganda is wrong. Mussolini regime’s use of Roman history in culture, as Arthurs has said, must be considered “not as empty posturing or nostalgia for a distant golden age, but as a revolutionary project” for making a new Italy.<sup>3</sup>

Yet this not only applies to Roman history. After the fall of Rome, from the Middle Ages to the Fascist era, various moments and events in the nation’s past were mobilised for the project to

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<sup>1</sup> Emilio Gentile, *9 maggio 1936: L’impero torna a Roma* (Laterza, 2007); originally recorded 4 March 2007. The podcast recording of this lecture is available (to listen and download) on the publisher’s website at <[http://www.laterza.it/index.php?option=com\\_laterza&Itemid=97&task=schedalibro&isbn=9788849100259](http://www.laterza.it/index.php?option=com_laterza&Itemid=97&task=schedalibro&isbn=9788849100259)> [accessed 28 May 2013]. Though he cited this comment, in this lecture, Gentile argued against the idea that the Fascist use of history was merely a means of propaganda. Similarly, another historian Mario Isnenghi defined the Fascist regime as “*un regime di parole*” but Isnenghi’s intention was not to stress pomposity or emptiness of the Fascist words. On the contrary, he emphasised the importance of rhetoric and languages used by the Fascist regime to understand Fascism; quoted in Montino, *Le parole educate*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*; Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*; Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). Although these works mainly focus on verifying the Fascist regime’s aspiration of modernising Italy, there are plenty of comments which imply that Fascism’s modernisation was designed to make Italy a hegemonic country in international politics, not only in its economy, technology and culture.

<sup>3</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 2.

Fascistise Italy. Moreover, the appropriation of history is not only seen in Fascist culture but also in Fascist education. Fascist history education was not designed for unilateral brainwashing for the purpose of propaganda. Rather it was a crucial part of the regime's effort to build a new Italy by imbuing children with the Fascist spirit and way of thinking. Also, its contents and method of presentation were forged during constant debates between diverse historical arguments, political agendas, and ideological aspirations of the Fascists. Fascist history education, as a result, conveyed its principal messages in a complex mixture of propaganda, persuasion, confession of the political faith, and emotional appeals.

Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to discuss Fascist history education from the perspective of the regime's commitment to the transformation, i.e., Fascistisation, of Italy, and the main focus will be *il Libro unico di Stato*, the Fascist school textbook. If the *Ventennio* was *un regno della parola* and its presentation of history was not merely bombastic empty rhetoric, the school textbook must be one of the first objects to investigate. It is not only because the Fascist school textbook was the most widely circulated and read history book in Fascist Italy,<sup>4</sup> but also because it was the prime educational material and the most representative form of narrative history used in public education. Prior to discussing the school textbook, I will at first explain the relationship between Fascism's ambition to construct a new Italy, its historiography and history education.

### **History education, *la bonifica umana* and national identity in Fascism's nation-state building**

In the inaugural speech of the National Fascist Institute of Culture (*L'Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura*) conference on 14 May 1927, Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini's first minister of educational affairs and the founder of the institute, said:

"Our ideal is a fascist Italy which corresponds with Italy: of a party that makes itself the State and nation. [A nation] which gradually must gather, actually not nominally, in its history and state, all Italians and educate and embrace them into the new faith [of Fascism]."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> "Il nostro ideale è quello di un'Italia fascista che coincida con l'Italia: di un partito che fattosi Stato sia la nazione stessa. La quale deve a grado a grado accogliere in sé effettivamente e non solo nominalmente,

Here, “embrace them” has two implications: to instil the Fascist interpretation of history into Italians and to urge them to participate in Fascism’s history making. This, as Gentile said, is equivalent to teaching Italians Fascism and how to make them Fascist men or women. In this statement, the relationship between history education and *la bonifica umana* perceived by Fascism, therefore, is clarified. By teaching the Fascist conception of history and historiography, the regime intended to create a new national identity, that is, the Fascist identity and as a result, Italians and eventually the whole Italian nation would be Fascistised.

Yet, it was not only the Fascists but also liberals who utilised history education in order to disseminate the consciousness of nationhood and to form a national identity. As we have seen in Chapter I, Fascists understood this because they were brought up and educated in Liberal Italy. So, the Fascists needed to differentiate their history education from liberalism. First, this required the establishment of a different model for the Italian nation-state’s future and a new national identity based on it. In fact, this was the reason why the Central Commission for the Textbook Examination finally rejected permission to circulate all existing textbooks and the Fascist government announced its monopoly of the textbook publication for elementary schools in 1929.<sup>6</sup> Although initially the regime tried to enhance Fascist identity in the existing textbooks through the process of examination and permission, they eventually decided that the existing textbooks were based upon “the false democratic conception” and “were inappropriate to meet a new historical, political, legal and economic demands” of Fascist Italy.<sup>7</sup> What then did Fascism aim to build for its ideal nation-state? What was the new national identity which the regime sought to construct? The ideal model for Italy, Fascism proposed, already existed in the nation’s

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nella storia e nello stato civile, tutti gli italiani, e tutti educarli, tutti stringerli nella nuova fede.”; Giovanni Gentile, *Fascismo e cultura*, (Milan: Treves, 1928), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> *Il libro per la scuola*, ed. by Ascenzi and Sani, pp. 27–28, or Morandini, ‘Fascismo e libro’, p. Iv. Apart from these two works, the following studies also give useful information on the Commission’s roles and the introduction of the state school textbook: Ciampi, ‘Il Risorgimento e la scuola’; Williams, *Fascist Thought and Totalitarianism*.

<sup>7</sup> Giuliano, ‘Relazione della Commissione’ and Alessandro Melchiori, ‘Relazione della Commissione Ministeriale per l’esame dei libri di testo da adottarsi nelle scuole elementari e nei corsi integrativi d’avviamento professionale’, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Bollettino Ufficiale*, 18 September 1928, I, no. 38, pp. 3161–62 (Both are quoted in *Il libro per la scuola*, ed. by Ascenzi and Sani, pp. 24–27). Giuliano (in 1926) and Melchiori (in 1928) both were the head of the Commission.



past, that is, in Ancient Rome, particularly imperial Rome. Mussolini once wrote in his newspaper, *Popolo d'Italia* celebrating the foundation day of Rome:

"Rome and Italy are in fact the two inseparable terms. [...] Certainly the Rome that we honour is not only the Rome of monuments and ruins, [...]. The Rome that we honour, but above all the Rome that we yearn and prepare for is another: it is not about eminent stones, but living souls: it is not a nostalgic contemplation of the past, but an arduous preparation of the future. Rome is our point of departure and reference; it is our symbol, or if you want, our myth. We dream of Roman Italy, that is, wise and strong, disciplined and imperial."<sup>8</sup>

Obviously, the cult of Rome was not a Fascist invention. There had been many liberals who had exalted Ancient Rome, and some of them, especially the nationalists, looked for the Italian nation's ideal future in colonialism or imperialism, emphasising the greatness of the Roman Empire.<sup>9</sup> However, the Fascist appropriation of imperial Rome had a significant difference. While liberals conceived Ancient Rome, even the empire, as a builder and propagator of the civilisation, the Fascists highlighted it more as a conqueror and ruler of the world. This resulted from the different conceptions of history between liberalism and Fascism; the liberal definition of history as the record of human progress and the Fascist counter-part as the endless struggle for domination between nations. From the liberal point of view, 'progress' meant that all human societies collaborated, helped and enlightened each other as much as possible, though sometimes through force, in order to share benefits brought by advanced technologies, thoughts and culture. Yet Fascists argued that it was a mere illusion or hypocrisy to say that collaboration

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<sup>8</sup> "Roma e Italia sono infatti due termini inscindibili. [...] Certo, la Roma che noi onoriamo, non è soltanto la Roma dei monumenti e dei ruderi, [...]. La Roma che noi onoriamo, ma soprattutto la Roma che noi vagheggiamo e prepariamo, è un'altra: non si tratta di pietre insigni, ma di anime vive: non è contemplazione nostalgica del passato, ma dura preparazione dell'avvenire. Roma è il nostro punto di partenza e di riferimento; è il nostro simbolo, o se si vuole, il nostro Mito. Noi sogniamo l'Italia romana, cioè saggia e forte, disciplinata e imperiale." Benito Mussolini, 'Passato e Avenire', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 21 Aprile 1922; quoted in his *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, 12 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1934-39), II, 277-78.

<sup>9</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 94-101, 171-82; Richard J. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism* (London: Arnold, 1998), p. 38; Visser, 'Pax Augusta', pp. 109-30; Patrizia Dogliani, *Il Fascismo degli italiani: Una storia sociale* (Turin: UTET, 2008), p. 247.

between nations was for common wellbeing.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence, the admiration of Rome in liberal historiographies stressed Italy's civilising mission in the name of humanity and fraternity, whereas Fascist exalted Roman glories and concluded with Italy's destiny as a superior nation, to rule over the world.<sup>11</sup> The future for Italy that Fascism proposed, therefore, was an imperial superpower with military strength, overseas colonies, and domination of international politics.

Although the Fascists wanted to differentiate their perception of history, they were not completely free from the liberal version which they had been taught. It meant that Fascists too stood on the cultural tradition descended from the time of Romantic historicism throughout Liberal Italy which looked back to the past not for regressing but for regenerating. Mussolini's writing above exposes this. He emphasises that Fascism recalls and praises the past (Rome) only for reference to the future, not for nostalgia. This statement reminds us of Giuseppe Verdi's comment in a letter mentioned in Chapter I. Fascism in other words denounced liberalism but never expelled the belief in a better future from historical discourses. Hence, Fascism interpreted history as the ceaseless struggle between nations whereas it rejected any apocalyptic vision of the future. Rather, Fascism willingly embraced images and aspirations of modernity, development and prosperity in its vision of the future.<sup>12</sup> Italy under Fascism, the regime suggested, should be a country of economic prosperity, with advanced technology, science and culture, and a well-developed territory.

Also Fascist Italy must be a disciplined country since disorder in the later years of liberalism, though the Fascist squads significantly contributed to its creation, was an excuse for Fascism's

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<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Gentile, *Politica e cultura*, 2 vols, ed. by Hervé A. Cavallera (Florence: Le Lettere, 1991), II, pp. 316-37. On Fascism's view of history as 'survival of the fittest' and Social Darwinism's influence of it, Roger Eatwell, "'A Spectral-syncretic" approach of generic Fascism', in *The Fascism Reader*, ed. by Aristotle Kallis (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 71-81 (p. 74).

<sup>11</sup> Visser, 'Pax Augusta', pp. 110-15. Although Fascism sought domination and power, the Nazi style of conquest and world order was an alien or absurd concept to Italian Fascists. In the Fascist dream, Italy ought to rule the world but this rule must be based on moral, spiritual, cultural, and physical superiority, not on terror, atrocities, and extermination of other peoples. For more about this; Davide Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 44-46.

<sup>12</sup> There are lots of historical works on modernity or desire for modernisation in Fascism. The followings are some examples; Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*; Emilio Gentile, 'The Conquest of Modernity: from Modernist Nationalism to Fascism', *Modernism/modernity*, 1, no. 3 (1994), 55-87; Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*.

seizure of power and the Fascist movement promised to bring back order, authority and stability to Italy. So, many Fascist discourses on Roman history were keen to describe discipline and order as the essence of *Romanità*. For example, Pietro De Francisci, known as one of the most energetic propagandists of *Romanità* in the Fascist era, argued that Romans retained the virtues of "order, simplicity, essentialness, hierarchy and discipline which constitute the essence of their civilisation."<sup>13</sup>

Fascism looked into history in order to establish a model for new Italians as well. Again, Roman history was used as a major reference point for the Fascist intellectuals. Mussolini once depicted ancient Romans as "invincible warriors" and "formidable constructors [of the colony and the Empire]".<sup>14</sup> Other Fascist leaders and intellectuals' definitions of Romans were not so different. According to them, Romans were industrious, frugal and productive workers and at the same time patriotic citizens in peace. In war, Fascists insisted, they were brave, sacrificial warriors and well-disciplined soldiers. This was the model of 'new' Italians which Fascism aimed to promote.<sup>15</sup> Fascism described such characteristics of Roman people as the ultimate secret of the establishment of the great civilisation so that Italians could revitalise this virtue in order to make Italy a dominant protagonist in world history once again.<sup>16</sup>

However, it was not enough simply to propose a 'new' model for the nation. In order to fulfil the Fascistisation of Italians and Italy, it was necessary to convince the nation that Fascism was the inevitable consequence of history and its vision of the future was the Italian destiny. Fascism's interpretation and conception of history was the vehicle to propagate this message. Thus this chapter, in the next part, will discuss the Fascist conception of history and historiography in education; particularly concerning its peculiarity, plausibility, and narrative appeals.

### **Fascist historiography and conception of history in education: peculiarity and appeals**

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<sup>13</sup> "i Romani hanno mantenuto fede a quegli ideali di ordine, di semplicità, di essenzialità, di gerarchia e di disciplina che costituiscono la sostanza della loro civiltà." Pietro De Francisci, *Spirito della civiltà romana* (Milan: Giuseppe Principato, 1940), p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, XI, 265 (originally delivered 21 April 1938 in Piazza Venezia, Rome).

<sup>15</sup> Philip Morgan, *Italian Fascism 1915-1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave macmillan, 2004), p. 132.

<sup>16</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*, pp. 39-40; Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 1-5 and 125-34.

Ideological origins of Fascism are extremely heterogeneous. Diverse political, social and cultural currents, some contradictory, influenced Fascists.<sup>17</sup> Also the Fascist movement consisted of many disparate political interests and factions which sometimes seemed incompatible with each other.<sup>18</sup> The Fascist historiography reflects this hybrid nature of Fascism. Various Fascist interpretations of history are thus neither homogeneous nor logically coherent, particularly from early years of the movement to the end of the 1920s. Yet as a governing power, Fascism needed to coordinate or homogenise its 'official' historiography, and made a great effort for this in the field of education. The debate on the 'continuity-discontinuity' of Fascism in Italian history was a conspicuous example in this respect.

It is well known that many so-called revolutionary Fascists tended to stress a radical break between Fascism and Liberal Italy. Accordingly historiographies produced by these Fascists branded liberalism as decadent or non-Italian and underlined Fascist Italy as a completely new nation-state in history, claiming that Fascism was not responsible for the legacy of liberal politics and culture. This is the 'discontinuity' thesis in Fascist historiographies and was the widely shared view among Fascist squadrists, journalists, amateur historians, ex-*arditi* war veterans and former anti-bourgeois syndicalists.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, there was an opposed historical interpretation of Fascism, the 'continuity' thesis. According to this view, Fascism was a righteous heir of 'healthy' spiritual and moral tradition of Italy which was *Italianità* and *Romanità*. So, protagonists of this thesis tended to emphasise the genealogical line of 'spiritual' heredity between Ancient Rome, the Risorgimento, the Great War and Fascism rather than a radical divorce from the nation's past.<sup>20</sup> After all, it was the 'continuity' thesis which prevailed in Fascist education because the regime was desperate to justify Fascism in the historical context of Italy.<sup>21</sup> This is proved by the fact that the Fascist regime devoted the largest proportion of

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<sup>17</sup> De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, pp. 138-47; A. James Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the intellectual origins of Fascism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, pp. 364-78.

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, *Italian Fascism*, p. 77; Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo*, pp. 122-38.

<sup>19</sup> Stuart J. Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo: il senso della continuità nella storiografia italiana', *Belfagor*, 20 (1965), 71-91 (pp. 76-78) and P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 69-70. For an example of primary source, see Carlo Antonio Avenati, *La rivoluzione italiana da Vittorio Alfieri a Benito Mussolini* (Turin: Paravia, 1934).

<sup>20</sup> Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo'; P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>21</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, p. 10; Ciampi, 'Il Risorgimento e la scuola'; P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 70-71, 103-6.

history textbooks for primary schools to explaining Ancient Rome, the Risorgimento, the Great War and Fascism; all 1930s' editions of the fourth grader textbook are entirely devoted to ancient history, mostly Ancient Rome, and all textbooks for third graders, including the 1940s' edition, handle historical events exclusively from the Risorgimento to the Fascist era.<sup>22</sup>

However, the Fascist regime did not totally exclude the idea of 'discontinuity' from its historiography in education. It could not reject advantages offered by the 'discontinuity' thesis which was able to dramatise the rise of Fascism and to consolidate the revolutionary and populist image of the movement. The regime adopted two alternative narrative strategies rather than directly highlighting the alien nature of Fascism from liberalism, or straightforwardly accusing Liberal Italy of degeneration and corruption. First, the Fascist historiography in education deliberately avoided the history of Liberal Italy by neglecting important social, cultural and economic aspects and events which happened after the annexation of Rome in 1870. There is tangible evidence in all Fascist school textbooks where there is almost no mention of social, cultural, economic and even political history between 1871 and 1921, except wars (World War I, war heroes), colonial enterprises, patriotic events (Irredentism, the Fiume Expedition), the Savoy royal family and the advent of Fascism.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, Fascist history education promoted the myth of the 'incomplete' Risorgimento which argued that the Unification and Italian nation-state building had not yet finished. This was not merely because a historically Italian territory (Dalmatia) remained under the foreign rule but also because Italy's historical mission to civilise and dominate the world was far from complete.<sup>24</sup> In doing so, the regime could expect not only to present itself as a historical successor and completer of the Risorgimento, but also to detach itself from Liberal Italy by tacitly implying that the liberal governments were unable to sustain the Risorgimento and thus liberalism betrayed the spirit of *Italianità*.

The regime's use of the 'continuity-discontinuity' debate in history education does not mean that Fascist historiography in education was nothing but an opportunistic creation of political propaganda. As Falasca-Zamponi pointed out, there is something "more than political

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<sup>22</sup> *Libro III classe* (1931); *Libro III classe* (1937); *Libro III classe* (1941); *Libro IV classe* (1932); *Libro IV classe* (1937); *Libro IV classe* (1941).

<sup>23</sup> *Libro III classe* (1931), pp. 279-319; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 94-117; *Libro V classe* (1931), pp. 179-95; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 180-96; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 170-83.

<sup>24</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, p. 10; Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 24-25; Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo', p. 76.

legitimation" or propaganda in Fascist historiography.<sup>25</sup> Otherwise, we would not detect fascinations, idiosyncrasies and plausibilities in the Fascist historiography and end up oversimplifying the regime's history education as simple brainwashing. So, if Fascist historiography is not a mere tool of propaganda, what else was it?

In Italy, there has been a long tradition of political culture which sought aspirations, explanations and excuses in history for contemporary political actions and situations. Talking about history in Italian culture was a way to exhibit one's political conviction, to reason one's interpretation of current affairs, to propose a vision of the future and, most importantly, to provoke political actions.<sup>26</sup> Fascists were not exempt from this tradition. They used their interpretation of history not only to impose Fascism or persuade people of the virtues of Fascism, but also to defend their ideology from antifascist criticism, and to encourage Italians to spontaneously participate in various enterprises of *le bonifiche*.<sup>27</sup> What is more peculiar in the Fascist use of history was that the regime, unlike liberal governments, tried to regulate and control production, presentation and consumption of historiographies in every public (both physical and metaphysical sense) space. Though Fascism had tolerated diverse Fascist interpretations of history, the regime gradually took control of them as the 'totalitarian' drive or Fascistisation began in earnest. For instance, in 1932 Mussolini actively intervened in the erection and inauguration of Anita Garibaldi's monument, and eventually shaped the messages and images of the event in his favour.<sup>28</sup> The Fascist regime also attempted tighter control over historical research by reshuffling and centralising academic institutions from the early 1930s onwards.<sup>29</sup> Even, then there were the occasions when the regime monitored many Fascist journals written and edited by young intellectuals, and forced them to cease publication due to their extremely different interpretations or conceptions of history from the official version.<sup>30</sup>

History education, too, is the field in which we can ascertain the Fascist regime's attitude to controlling the production and use of historiographies. The Fascist government monopolised publication of the primary school's textbook, regulated the history curriculum and syllabus for

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<sup>25</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacles*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo', pp. 71-74.

<sup>27</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 72-95.

<sup>29</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, pp. 139-91.

<sup>30</sup> Alessandra Tarquini, *Il Gentile dei fascisti: Gentiliani e antigentiliani nel regime fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), pp. 165-211.

secondary schools, subsidised school's or the youth organisation's excursions, promoted essay compositions, screening cinemas at schools and so on, in order to expose children to selected historical themes, figures, events and messages as much as possible.<sup>31</sup> Yet, there is another reason to indicate why Fascist history education matters. The principal material used for teaching history in public education has been and still is, a book, which delivers messages in a largely narrative form. In other words, story-telling is the main way to teach history in schooling. The manner of narration in the Fascist history teaching materials, i.e. rhetoric, plot, language, metaphor and semantics, reveals some idiosyncrasies of the Fascist historiography.

Religious character is a part of such idiosyncrasies. Emilio Gentile analysed religiosity in the Fascist representation of history from rituals, public ceremonies, monuments and symbols.<sup>32</sup> Narrative histories in Fascist education also contain religiosity though it is hidden and subtler than in the visual forms of presentations. Fascist texts in history education not only frequently used religious vocabularies like '*fede*' (faith), '*sacrificio*' (sacrifice), '*salvezza*' (salvation), '*santamissione*' (sacred mission), '*consacrare*' (to consecrate) etc. but also employed hagiographies, with stories of war heroes, 'prophets' of Fascism, and Fascist 'martyrs', into the history narration.<sup>33</sup> These gave Fascist historiography a component of popular appeal because apart from visual images, for centuries the masses were taught Catholicism largely by stories of saints and martyrs, not by doctrines or theology. History-telling in Fascist education, therefore, might have felt familiar, particularly to the children from the lower class families. The end of the textbook also shows a religious aspect. Fascist historiography linked Fascism's vision of a utopian future to the nation's past and present. As the Bible ends with the prediction which convinces followers of Jesus that the final Redemption and eternal Paradise will follow their long suffering, the Fascist textbook's historiography ends by suggesting that history would lead Italians, under the guidance of Fascism, into prosperity, wellbeing and world supremacy, in

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<sup>31</sup> As for students' essay compositions in the *Ventennio*, see Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, pp. 84-85. For more about the use of films in Fascist education refer to G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, trans. by Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 162-67; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 124-26; *Libro III classe* (1941) pp. 108-12, 114-17, 119; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175-8.

return for the nation's prolonged division, servitude and inferiority.<sup>34</sup> The last page of the 1930s' *Libro III classe* epitomises these religious elements (religious languages/concepts and utopianism) of Fascist historiography:

"Italy, divided and enslaved a hundred years ago, is today one of the world's major powers, to which [Italy] it presents an admirable display of discipline, labour and **faith**. The heroes and **martyrs** of the Risorgimento, the Great War, and the Fascist Revolution **made the Fatherland free, united, prosperous and strong**. Now it's up to you to grow up healthy in body and mind in order to continue this task so that Italy becomes, once again, the bright **guiding light of civilisation**; ready like your fathers and forefathers, to spring to arms if the Fatherland calls, and to die serenely, if its salvation and greatness demand the **supreme sacrifice** from you."<sup>35</sup>

One might argue that the Bible proposes not merely a utopian future but also the dreadful Apocalypse and the Last Judgement. This may be true, but actually this is one of the most noticeable differences between the Fascist historiography in education and its Nazi counterpart. While Nazi history education emphasised the apocalyptic prospect of the Western civilisation and urged the 'Aryan' race to conquer and purify (i.e. physically eliminate inferior races) Europe to prevent the decadence and extinction of the human beings,<sup>36</sup> the Fascist teaching of history never terrified children with such a prediction of doom. Instead, Fascist education described

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<sup>34</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 176–80; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 197–205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 194–204. For more about the Fascist vision of a utopia see Charles Burdett, 'Italian Fascism and Utopia', *History of the Human Sciences*, 16, no. 1 (2003), 93–108.

<sup>35</sup> "L'Italia, cento anni fa divisa e schiava, è oggi una delle maggiori potenze del mondo, al quale presenta una mirabile spettacolo di disciplina, di lavoro e di fede. Gli eroi ed i martiri del Risorgimento, della grande guerra, della Rivoluzione Fascista hanno fatto la Patria libera, unita, prospera e forte. Spetta ora a voi crescere sani di mente e di corpo per continuarne l'opera, in modo che l'Italia sia, ancora una volta, splendido faro di civiltà; pronti come i vostri padri ed i vostri avi, se la Patria chiamasse, a balzare alle armi, ed a cadere serenamente, se la sua salvezza e la sua grandezza esigesse da voi il sacrificio supremo." *Libro III classe* (1931), p. 327 or *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 180 (bold by myself).

<sup>36</sup> On the apocalyptic vision of the future in Nazi education, refer to Gilmer Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: Race and History in Nazi Textbooks* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985).



history as if Italy had been constantly approaching utopia since Fascism's seizure of power.<sup>37</sup> So, the main focus of the Fascist history-telling was not Judgement Day but the salvation of the imminent paradise by Fascism.

Religiosity, however, is not the only peculiarity of the Fascist narrative history. Rather, the real peculiarity and appeal of the Fascist historiography should be detected in its hybrid character. American historian Claudio Fogu insisted that the Fascist presentation and use of history were a combination of rationality and irrationality, of aesthetics and propaganda, and of high culture and popular culture.<sup>38</sup> His argument is absolutely right. The Fascist historiography contains motivations to modernise the country and to complete the nation-state building (rationality) as well as emotional aspects of religiosity and the thirsty for power or domination (irrationality). It has also been explained that the Fascist interpretation of history in education is a practical choice of the regime as well as for propaganda, and at the same time a partial product of the traditional use of historiographies in Italian and European political culture. In addition, it is evident that the Fascist teaching of history was the mixture of high culture and popular culture because it merged popular communication such as story-telling, hagiographies and religious languages with text-reading, which was still regarded as high culture in a country where a large proportion of the population remained illiterate.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, Fogu overlooked the validity of studying narrative histories in a bid to uncover fascinations and peculiarities of Fascist historiography saying that;

"[...] fascism was characterized by a politics of history that cannot be identified with the fascistization of the historical past that ideologues and professional historians pursued [...] during the regime. [...] this historical culture had very little to do with the Mussolinian core of [...] the politics of enthusiasm [...]"<sup>40</sup>

I, however, believe that the historical writings or speeches made by Fascist historians and high profile intellectuals, the school textbooks, and other written sources used in education, not only contain elements of enthusiasm for the political faith but also incorporate, to some extent,

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<sup>37</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 176-80; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 194-204.

<sup>38</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary* (in particular, see the Introduction, chapter 1 and Epilogue).

<sup>39</sup> The illiteracy rate of Italy was 35.8% in 1921, just a year before the March on Rome, and dropped to 21% in 1931. See, G. Genovesi, *Storia della scuola*, p. 226 (table no. 7).

<sup>40</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, p. 193.

rational reasoning or persuasion in favour of Fascism together with opportunistic propaganda. I think that we could see explicit examples of this in the Fascist history narrative used in education, especially its most representative form, school textbooks. Hence, in the next part this chapter will engage in pinpointing core elements, messages and connotations in Fascist school textbooks which will reveal the hybrid character of Fascist historiography.

### **Fascist historiography in school textbooks: core elements and connotations**

From the beginning of their movement, innumerable Fascists talked and wrote about history. As Fascists had different ideological conceptions and understandings of Fascism, their discourses of history were neither coherent nor perfectly harmonised. Paradoxically, however, this is why the Fascist school textbook should be examined as the historiography in the textbook is almost a unique product that reflected various historical debates in which many leading Fascist intellectuals and politicians engaged. Besides, we should remember that Fascist historiography in the school textbooks was the outcome of the regime's close supervision and systematic control over the whole process of publication, from the selection of authors to the circulation of copies, which rarely occurred in the field of literary work and history writing.<sup>41</sup>

The State school textbook, *Libro unico di Stato*, is the most widely read narrative history produced by Fascism. In the first academic year (1930-31) of the State textbooks, the regime printed and distributed approximately 5,455,000 copies, a third of them contained a subject on history.<sup>42</sup> Such a vast number of copies continued to be printed, supplied and used until the regime introduced a completely new edition of the texts in 1941.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, because of the number of circulated copies and the extent of its geographical distribution, the State school

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<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that Fascism did not regulate or harness literary productions. The Fascist government exploited various, though mostly indirect, methods to control literary works, books and other publications including history writing. See Galfré, *Il regime degli*; George Talbot, *Censorship in Fascist Italy 1922-43* (Basingstoke: Palgrave macmillan: 2007).

<sup>42</sup> This figure includes all primary school textbooks at all grades. Among them, 'supplementary' texts for the fourth, *Libro IV classe* (1931) and fifth graders, *Libro V classe* (1931) and the unitary text for the third graders, *Libro III classe* (1931) contain a 'history' part. As for detail information on variations and categories of the Fascist school textbooks, this thesis will handle it in the later chapter. For the exact figures of the printed copies, refer to P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 66 (note no. 20).

<sup>43</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, pp. 74-83.

textbook may have been more widely disseminated than any other Fascist history book. The textbook was used in all elementary schools in the country before the introduction of a separate text for Jewish children and the state monopolised the whole process of production. It is thus appropriate to start the investigation of Fascist history education with the school textbook's historiography. From now, this research will examine what components –historical events, figures and periods, messages and topics– made up the *Libro unico di Stato's* narrative history and why they were chosen. For this investigation, I will compare some Fascist ideologues' historical discourses and debates in order to expose the regime's intentions in selecting or rejecting some arguments, periodizations, and hypotheses in the textbook's history.

#### 1. 'Nation as a creation of the human will' and the 'incomplete' Risorgimento

The Fascist historiography in the textbook is based on Giovanni Gentile's concept of the nation and history which is different from its liberal counterpart. Gentile, the most famous Fascist intellectual, was not a historian but a philosopher and literary critic. Nevertheless, his active engagement in education and his important contribution to Fascist historiography, specifically the philosophy of history, are undeniable. He served as Mussolini's first Minister of Public Instruction (1922~24) and was the founder and the first president of the National Fascist Institute of Culture. Moreover, he was the de facto writer of Mussolini's the Doctrine of Fascism, and one of the most dominant members of the Arts and Humanities academic circle in Fascist Italy.<sup>44</sup>

Gentile rejected the liberalist and nationalist conception of the nation defined as a naturally existing human group. According to him, a nation was not simply composed of a common blood, language, culture, territory and past; these were necessary elements but not decisive factors in forming a nation. What decisively fused these components into a nation, he argued, was the population's will to be a distinctive and independent nation.<sup>45</sup> By defining a nation as a creation of the human will, Gentile could assert that "the nation, in truth, is [...] a programme, a mission"

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<sup>44</sup> *Dictionary of Modern Italian*, pp. 174–76 and Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 25–27.

<sup>45</sup> Giovanni Gentile, *Origins and Doctrines of Fascism with Selections from Other Works*, trans. and ed. by A. James Gregor (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2005), pp. 25–28; originally from Giovanni Gentile, *Origini e dottrina del fascismo* (Rome: Libreria del Littorio, 1929). Yet, according to Emilio Gentile, we can trace back the similar comments in the philosopher's writings as early as 1919. See E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 159–60 or Massimo Rosati, *Il patriottismo italiano* (Rome–Bari: Laterza, 2000), pp. 87–88.

to undertake.<sup>46</sup> With the same logic, he also saw a nation's past, memories and monuments, i.e. its history, as something to actively create.<sup>47</sup>

This Gentilian definition of the nation and history is important since it gives a logical foundation and plausibility to Fascism's myth of the 'incomplete' Risorgimento, even though such a definition does not appear in the school textbooks. This is the myth of the 'incomplete' Risorgimento based upon the Gentilian idea (bold); liberalism succeeded in physically unifying the peninsula but failed to complete the nation-state building **because under the liberal regimes, Italians gradually lost their will and passion to be a nation** which had exploded in the Unification and the Wars of Independence. **Only with the Great War, did Italians begin to reinvigorate this will in their spirit and then Fascism inspired them to fully restore it.** As a consequence, **Fascism would finalise the Risorgimento and bring about the completion of the Italian nation-state in which all Italians would participate in its historical mission** to construct the Fascist Empire.<sup>48</sup> In fact, such a blatant remark of the 'incomplete' Risorgimento is seldom made in the textbooks.<sup>49</sup> We can, however, detect hidden elements of this myth in the books, especially in their account of the Great War, which this thesis will demonstrate in Chapter V through close reading of the text.

## 2. Fascism's Historical Continuity-Discontinuity

Inevitably, the 'incomplete' Risorgimento myth raises questions about Liberal Italy; what was the historical meaning of post-unification Italy? Was it totally shameful and negligible epoch in history? Did Italy under liberalism have nothing to do with the Fascist era? This question is closely associated with the debate on historical continuity-discontinuity of Fascism. As explained above, the continuity argument was more predominant in Fascist history education and the most renowned champion of Fascism's 'historical continuity' thesis was Gioacchino Volpe.

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, p. 47; originally from Giovanni Gentile, *Che cosa è il fascismo: Discorsi e polemiche* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1925), pp. 26-28.

<sup>47</sup> G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, p. 48.

<sup>48</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 151-52. On Giovanni Gentile's interpretation of the Risorgimento and of Fascism as its successor, see G. Gentile, *Che cosa è*, pp. 28-29, 123-25 (primary source) and Giuseppe Parlato, 'Giovanni Gentile: from the Risorgimento to Fascism', *Telos*, 133 (2005), 75-94 (78-81) or Roberto Dainotto, 'Tramonto and Risorgimento: Gentile's Dialects and the Prophecy of nationhood', in *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, ed. by Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg (New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 241-55.

<sup>49</sup> Instead, the later editions of the textbook show a few more recognizable statements of the myth; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175-204.

Unlike Gentile, Volpe was a professional historian and did not engage much in Fascist politics or ministerial posts (he was only once elected as a Fascist deputy). Nonetheless, he joined Fascism early, presumably prior to 1924, and was one of the most academically and politically influential men in the academic circle of historians during the *Ventennio*. He was director of an important historical research institution, worked as chief editor of several academic journals and also served as the general secretary of the Italian Academy (1929–34).<sup>50</sup>

It is Volpe's book, *L'Italia in cammino* (1927) which was often cited by the Fascists when the famous anti-fascist liberal, Benedetto Croce, implied Fascism was a deviation in the historical process in his polemical book, *Storia d'Italia dal 1870 al 1914* (1928). Arguably, Volpe refuted Croce's condemnation of Fascism by clarifying that Fascism was the culmination of Italy's historical development. Notwithstanding his harsh criticism of Croce's book, however, Volpe's main point was not that Croce saw Liberal Italy on the legitimate genealogical line of the Risorgimento. His criticism focused on Croce's 'parenthesis' argument which exempted Fascism from history.<sup>51</sup> It was non-sense for Volpe to suggest any kind of a 'parenthesis' or deviation in history because he believed that history on the whole was an ongoing process of improvement despite intermittent problems.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, in this respect he differentiated himself from other Fascists like Gentile who asserted that Fascism directly inherited *Italianità* from the Risorgimento, and had nothing to do with the 'degenerate' liberal era. He affirmed this, as follows:

"It seemed to short-sighted or demanding Italians that after 1860 and after 1870 Italy had lost its vigour and passion. The opposite was true: Italy, in those 50 years [1860/70–1915], had gained new and even

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<sup>50</sup> For more about Volpe's career and influence on historical research under Fascism, see Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 27–29; Gabriele Turi, 'Il problema Volpe', *Studi storici*, 19 (1978), 175–86; Renzo De Felice, 'Gli storici italiani nel periodo fascista', *Storia contemporanea*, 14 (1983), 744–63; Richard J. Bosworth, 'Italy's Historians and the Myth of Fascism', in *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War*, ed. by Richard Langhorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 85–105 (pp. 88–93).

<sup>51</sup> For details on the 'parenthesis' debate between Volpe and Croce, see Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid; Cinzio Violante, 'Introduzione', in Gioacchino Volpe, *Il Medio Evo*, ed. by Silvia Moretti (Rome–Bari: Laterza, 1999), pp. xii–xvi (first published in 1927).

greater strength; increased its experience, knowledge, technical abilities, and wealth; [...] learned to organise and make its children more hardworking. In short, [...] it had organised a kind of new Risorgimento.”<sup>53</sup>

If Volpe was a representative figure of the continuity thesis, Gentile who proposed the ‘Two Italies’ theory was close to the opposite. But, actually, it was Giuseppe Prezzolini and other critics of Liberal Italy who coined the rhetoric of ‘Two Italies’. In 1904, Prezzolini wrote an article entitled ‘Le due Italie (The two Italies)’ for *Il Regno* in which he insisted that his generation’s mission was to burn down the sterile and decadent Italy of the older generation.<sup>54</sup> Gentile adapted this metaphor and elaborated it further in his interpretation of history extending Prezzolini’s generational gap into historical periods. Gentile’s argument of ‘Two Italies’ begins with his assessment of the Renaissance. He judged the Renaissance as “the age of individualism” which made Italians fall into “the indifference, scepticism, cynicism, and corrupt” and consequently lost “the faith” in their Fatherland.<sup>55</sup> Such a vile legacy of the Renaissance, he continued, infected the spirit of many Italians for centuries and emerged again with materialism, egoism and universalism in Liberal Italy, or “cowardly, myopic, and sceptical neutralism” of the

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<sup>53</sup> “Sembrava, agli Italiani di vista corta o agli Italiani incontentabili, che, dopo il 1860, dopo il 1870, l’Italia avesse perduto nerbo e slancio. Era vero il contrario: che l’Italia, in quei cinquanta anni, aveva fatto nuovo e maggiori forze; accresciuto la sua esperienza, il suo sapere, le sue abilità tecniche, la sua ricchezza; [...] imparato ad associare e rendere più fattive le forze dei suoi figli. Insomma aveva, [...], preparato quasi un nuovo Risorgimento.” Gioacchino Volpe, *Il Risorgimento dell’Italia* (Rome: Fasci italiani all’estero, 1934), pp. 257–58.

<sup>54</sup> Giuseppe Prezzolini, ‘Le due Italie’, *Il Regno*, I, 26 (1904), pp. 3–4; Niamh Cullen, *Piero Gobetti’s Turin: Modernity, Myth and Memory* (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 61–62. In fact, the exact beginning of the ‘Two Italies’ rhetoric is uncertain. Some scholars propose different hypothesis. Emilio Gentile, for instance, credits Giustino Fortunato with the rhetoric. Fortunato wrote an article, also titled ‘Le due Italie’, for *La Voce* in 1911 in which he highlighted the enormous socio-economic gap between the North and the South; E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, p. 58. Meanwhile, another historian argues that the ‘Two Italies’ rhetoric already existed in the late eighteenth century and its origin lay around the Unification: see Giovanni Bellardelli, ‘Le due Italie’ in Giovanni Bellardelli, Luciano Cafagna, Ernesto Galli della Loggia, and Giovanni Sabbatucci, *Miti e storia dell’Italia unita* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), pp. 53–62. Yet, whoever the real initiator was and whenever it started, the point is that the rhetorical device of ‘Two Italies’ had already been established in Italian cultural political discourses before the Great War and influenced Giovanni Gentile’s thought.

<sup>55</sup> G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, pp. 44–45 (Quotations in p. 44).

pacifists in the Great War. According to his definition, all of this represented the Italy of the past, or the 'Old' Italy.<sup>56</sup> However, there also exists another Italy that he admired. This Italy was the incarnation of 'healthy' traditions of the national spirit; patriotism, love of *Patria*, idealism, sacrifice, loyalty, discipline and unity. Gentile argued that history demonstrated that these Italian virtues thrived in the age of the Risorgimento and Interventionism in the Great War and Fascism redeemed them in his time. Hence, for Gentile the Italy of the Risorgimento and Fascism is equal to Italy of the present, in other words, the 'New' Italy.<sup>57</sup>

Obviously, accepting the 'Two Italies' thesis provokes a problem. Sharply polarising historical periods into the 'old' and the 'new' could jeopardize the notion of history as the continuous process of human deeds. Gentile knew this and attempted to rectify the problem. His solution was to underline Fascism as the moral and spiritual continuation of the Risorgimento with little mention of post-unification Italy before World War I.<sup>58</sup> The school textbook employed the same solution as well. History narration in the textbook tried to forge parallel images between Fascist and Risorgimento values by employing the same narrative format and style used for tales of Risorgimento heroic patriots in World War I, among which Fascists or proto-Fascists (Gabriele D'Annunzio, Mussolini, Costanzo Ciano) are included.<sup>59</sup>

Certainly, Volpe was the antagonist to the 'Two Italies' paradigm which categorised the Risorgimento, Interventionism in the Great War and Fascism into 'good' ages, and the Middle Age, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Liberal Italy into 'bad' ages. In the 'bad' periods of history, only Italian communes' spirit of political autonomy, and scientific or artistic creativity were admitted as positive traits.<sup>60</sup> Volpe did not accept such a segmental concept of history. From his study of medieval Italy, Volpe came to the conviction that history was a continual (not

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-14, 45-46 (Quotation in p. 45) and E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, p. 161.

<sup>57</sup> G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, pp. 4-5, 48-49, 58-59; Giovanni Gentile, *I profeti del Risorgimento italiano* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1923). These works deal with Gentile's interpretation of the Risorgimento in the context of the 'Two Italies' thesis; Alessandro Amato, 'Per la critica dello Stato: filosofia, etica e storia nell'Attualismo di Giovanni Gentile' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Padua, 2009), pp. 226-34 and 249-68, Dainotto, 'Tramonto and Risorgimento' and Parlato, 'Giovanni Gentile'.

<sup>58</sup> Dainotto, 'Tramonto and Risorgimento', p. 244; Parlato, 'Giovanni Gentile', p. 80. While Dainotto and Parlato briefly cite that Gentile stressed historical continuation of Fascism, Amato approaches Gentile's reason to advocate the idea of history as the continuum from a philosophical perspective; Amato, 'Per la critica', pp. 211-34. For Gentile's own words, look G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>59</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 63-67, 162-67; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 138-40, 175-180, 182.

<sup>60</sup> G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrines*, pp. 43-45 or G. Gentile, *Che cosa è*, pp. 13-16.

continuous) approach towards eventual progress. So, in general he emphasised improvements, growth, developments, resurgence and renovations far more than backwardness, collapses, declines, decadence and destruction in the history of Italy from medieval times to the Fascist era.<sup>61</sup> Such a tendency is verified by the overall description in his books which were published even earlier than *L'Italia in cammino*.<sup>62</sup>

The School textbook embraced the historiography of continuity hypothesis in four points. First, the textbook adopts positive sides of medieval-Renaissance history, not only the autonomy of communes and superb achievements in art and science, but also economic, industrial and demographic growth, the evolution of capitalism, the emergence of the middle class, and development of the legal system and civil authorities etc. One of the most explicit examples is in the 1930s' fifth grader book, which states:

"There was, at that time, a renewed fervour for life in our Fatherland. Commerce and industry flourished; the population in the cities and countryside grew; the social class, which dedicated itself to trade, had enriched itself and grown in power: that is, not the feudal lords, but the bourgeoisie"<sup>63</sup>

Second, history in the textbook hails the Fascist regime's accomplishment of uniting the nation. Initially, it was Volpe's argument that saw Fascism as the apex of the Risorgimento in terms of the regime's achievement of social integration in Italy.<sup>64</sup> Third, periodization of the Risorgimento in the textbook is affected. In the late 1930s' edition of the fifth grade textbook, the beginning of eighteenth-century Italy is entitled "*Il Risorgimento*". Under this heading, the text states that

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<sup>61</sup> Violante, 'Introduzione', pp.xii-xvi and Turi, 'Il problema Volpe', pp. 184-85.

<sup>62</sup> Gioacchino Volpe, *Medioevo italiano* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1923); Gioacchino Volpe, *Momenti di storia italiana* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1925); Volpe, *Il MedioEvo*.

<sup>63</sup> "Vi era allora nella nostra patria tutto un rinnovato fervore di vita. Fiorivano i commerci e le industrie; era aumentata la popolazione delle città e delle campagne; s'era arricchita ed era cresciuta in potenza la classe sociale che attendeva ai traffici: cioè non i feudatari, ma la borghesia."; *Libro V classe* (1931/7), p. 109. Similar comments are also seen in; *Libro V classe* (1931/7), pp. 108-11, 117, 121-24, 131-32.

<sup>64</sup> "Pochi anni sono trascorsi dalla Marcia su Roma, è già aspetto della nostra Italia è completamente mutato. Non più scioperi, tumulti, indisciplinazione; ma ordine, rispetto verso i superiori, concordia operosa tra chi lavora e chi dà lavoro."; *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 172. As for Volpe's assessment of Fascism's social integration, Gioacchino Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino: l'ultimo cinquantennio* (Milan: Treves, 1927); Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 29 and 32; Turi, 'Il problema Volpe', p. 185.



“the Risorgimento began” with the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), whereas the same section title is attached in the forefront of the Congress of Vienna (1815) section in the previous edition with a clear comment of Risorgimento’s beginning.<sup>65</sup> Lastly, before the 1940s’ edition the school textbooks mention the French Revolution’s impact on the Italian national identity saying that Italian people’s consciousness of the nationhood and desire for the unification sprang from the aftermath of the Napoleonic War.<sup>66</sup> All of these arguments are found in Volpe’s historiography as well. He was anxious to interpret the Risorgimento in the wider context of European history and his book, *Il Risorgimento dell’Italia* (1934) covers the early decades of the eighteenth century as an early phase of the Risorgimento.<sup>67</sup> Also, Volpe was willing to admit that the Revolution broke out in France and the Napoleon’s rule over the peninsula stimulated the growth of Italian national identity.<sup>68</sup>

However, despite influence from some ideas, which promoted the narration of history as a continual march of progress, such an approach never materialised in the textbook. It was not only because Volpe and his followers were surpassed by De Vecchi’s political power in the struggle for leadership of academic institutions,<sup>69</sup> but also because the Fascist continuity thesis was to some extent self-contradictory. To reconcile a generally positive view of Liberal Italy with advocating the historical necessity of Fascism was not an easy task even for a skilful historian like Volpe. Volpe and his followers’ common solution was to admit economic achievements, advancements of society and growing sense of nationality among the masses

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<sup>65</sup> *Libro V classe* (1931), pp. 136, 147; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136, 147 (both quotations in the 1937 edition’s p. 136). The title “Il Risorgimento” disappeared and the author toned down positive comments on the impact of the Napoleonic Empire in the 1940s’ edition. There was De Vecchi’s influence and another reason behind this which will be discussed further later in the thesis.

<sup>66</sup> *Libro V classe* (1931/7), p. 144; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 143. For more detail, see note no. 217 and 218 in Chapter IV of this thesis.

<sup>67</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, p. 176 and Volpe, *Il Risorgimento dell’Italia*, pp. 16–20. Volpe here implies that Italian people’s sense of the national identity began to take shape decades before the Genoa uprising in 1746: “Insomma, Piemontesi, Lombardi, Napoletani ecc., cominciare a sentirsi veramente figli di una patria sola, a vergognarsi veramente della servitù e del basso stato in cui essa [Italia] era caduta, mentre attorno altri popoli crescevano di Potenza e ricchezza, a desiderare veramente il bene di questa patria.” (quoted in p. 18).

<sup>68</sup> Volpe, *L’Italia in cammino*, p. 19; Volpe, *Momenti di storia*, pp. v–vi; Volpe, *Il Risorgimento dell’Italia*, pp. 9–34.

<sup>69</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 174–78.

under liberalism, and on the other hand to condemn failures of parliamentary democracy, inefficiency of liberal political apparatus and ruling classes' insensibility to social demand for reforms. This sophisticated mode of narration, however, made their historiography seem ambivalent and sometimes inconsistent.<sup>70</sup>

### 3. House of Savoy and origins of the Risorgimento

The Kingdom of Italy's royal family, the Savoy, has French origins. By emphasising the *Italianità* of the Risorgimento, Fascism, as its self-claimed spiritual heir, needed to historically vindicate the Italianness of the monarch because the Fascist regime chose to coexist with the monarchy. This motivation produced historical works which either linked the rise of the Savoy monarchy with history of the Risorgimento or argued that the royal family had Italian origins. Pro-monarch Fascists were especially keen to encourage or produce these studies. Cesare Maria De Vecchi, a well-known Fascist squad leader (one of the *quadrumvirs*) and a high-profile politician in the Fascist regime, was representative of this group.

De Vecchi was neither a scholar nor a professional historian. Yet he politically ruled over Italy's historical research institutions from the mid-1930s and even overwhelmed the power of Gentile and Volpe in academic circles. In 1933 Mussolini appointed him as the president of a major historical institute for studying the Risorgimento (*Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, National Society for the Study of the Risorgimento), and from then on De Vecchi launched a scheme to fascistise academic historical research. At first, he reshuffled his own institute and after being named as Minister of Education in 1935, implemented 'reform' on a larger scale. Public historical institutions or societies were restructured and subordinated to a newly created central organisation and all private institutions were brought under the control of central authorities.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Stuart Woolf briefly pointed out this dilemma within Volpe's historiography of Liberal Italy; Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo', p. 79 (especially note no. 30). Additionally, Volpe's 1931 edition of *L'Italia in cammino* also shows this contradiction. In the preface to the book which vindicates improvements and achievements of the liberal era, he accuses liberal politics and ruling classes of decadence; David Forgacs, 'Nostra patria: Revisions of the Risorgimento in the Cinema 1925-52', in *Making and Remaking*, pp. 257-76 (p. 262).

<sup>71</sup> On De Vecchi's centralisation of historical institutions, see Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, pp. 139-44 and Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 173-75. For his career, *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, ed. by Philip V. Cannistraro (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 167-68.

However, he brought more to the field of historical research than centralised control over academic institutions. De Vecchi, as a monarchist who was convinced that the Savoy were inseparable from the history of the Risorgimento, also imposed his favoured view of history on academic research.<sup>72</sup> For instance, under his directorship (1933–1943), the National Society for the Study of the Risorgimento's journal, *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, published articles which suggested that the beginning of the Risorgimento was the early years of the eighteenth century, when then Duke of Savoy, Vittorio Amedeo II, decisively broke away from French political influence and became the King of Sicily (later Sardinia).<sup>73</sup> Before his directorship, such essays are rarely seen in the same journal, although there were always a few scholars, who were eager to incorporate the Savoyard dukes or monarchs into 'Italian' history, long before the birth of Fascism.<sup>74</sup>

While it is true that Volpe also backed the hypothesis which traced the origins of the Risorgimento back to the early eighteenth century, his motivation was different from De Vecchi's. As explained, Volpe began his history of the Risorgimento with the eighteenth century to advocate the 'continual' development of national history and the inter-relationship between the

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<sup>72</sup> *Historical Dictionary*, p. 167.

<sup>73</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 175–78; P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 42, 97. Actually, Fogu and Genovesi suggest different years as the exact starting point of the Risorgimento that De Vecchi conceived. While Fogu hints around 1730, Genovesi pinpoints the precise year 1706. De Vecchi did not clarify it. His references to the exact year are indecisive or sometimes confusing. But regarding his overall intention, I think that it is more reasonable to insert parts of the Vittorio Amedeo II's reign into De Vecchi's perception of the Risorgimento. So, it would be better to consider the years between 1706 and 1713 or 1720 rather than 1730 (Vittorio Amedeo II's abdication).

<sup>74</sup> From 1914 (the foundation year of the journal) to 1932, less than 5 essays were published which examined early eighteenth-century subjects, as a part of the Risorgimento in *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*. On the other hand, the journal published more than 20 of those kinds of works, many of them directly dealt with the Savoy or Kingdom of Sardinia, between 1933 and 1943; *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 1–30. Some of the typical works published in the journal which attempted to prove the Savoy's inseparability from the Risorgimento's history; Carlo Avenati, 'Italianità della Savoia', *Rassegna storica del risorgimento*, 27 (1940), 156–68 and Ernesto Pontieri, 'Carlo Emanuele III', *Rassegna storica del risorgimento*, 22 (1935), 681–700. For an example of historians who tried to bridge between the early history of the Savoy and Italy, refer to Enrico Artifoni, 'Scienza del sabaudismo: Prime ricerche su Ferdinando Gabotto storico del medioevo (1866–1918) e la Società storica subalpina', *Bollettino dell'istituto storico italiano per il medioevo*, 100 (1997), 167–91.

Risorgimento and the wider context of European history. Whereas De Vecchi did so in order to verify Italian identity of the royal family and the pure *Italianità* of the Risorgimento. Consequently, De Vecchi's '*Settecento Risorgimento*' hypothesis, unlike Volpe's, evolved into a strongly negative view of the French Revolution. So, he not only neglected any positive influence of the French Revolution on Italy, but also came to the negative verdict on the event itself.<sup>75</sup> This view of the *quadrumvir* is easily discernible in the school textbooks and is stronger in the 1940s edition.<sup>76</sup>

De Vecchi's '*Settecento Risorgimento*' is not relevant to the 'continuity-discontinuity' debate as well. He tended to attack every historical epoch in which Italy was divided or subjugated to the foreign rule as the age of non-*Italianità* without qualification.<sup>77</sup> At a glance, this tendency seems similar to Gentilian thought. There is, without doubt, common ground between his and Gentile's perception of history, that is, the heredity argument of the *Italianità* which asserted that *Italianità* descended from the Risorgimento to Fascism through the Great War. However, De Vecchi's historiography looks cruder and oversimplified because he was ignorant of or indifferent to the 'continuity-discontinuity' thesis. Gentile was a capable scholar; he was aware that it was paradoxical to contend that one era was totally decadent and the next was perfectly good. Hence he was cautious to argue his 'Two Italies' thesis where he generally tried to explain the historical development of the dialectic paradigm. In short, Gentile intended to describe that a 'good' Italy overcame a 'bad' one in the dialectic sense rather than underscoring the rupture between the two. Unlike Gentile, De Vecchi was not a professional academic and was unaware of the complex concept of the philosophy of history as the continuum of history. This made his historiography oversimplified and segmented. In other words, De Vecchi criticised 'bad' (non-Italian or foreign) historical ages in every respect and exalted only the ages of *Italianità*; the

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<sup>75</sup> Cesare Maria De Vecchi, 'Il senso della storia', *Rassegna storica del risorgimento*, 20 (1933), 439-50 (pp. 444-45) and P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 42.

<sup>76</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136, 143-6 and *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 136-45. The 1940s' edition of the text eliminated almost any mention of the French Revolution and Napoleonic War's positive influence on the growth of Italian national identity. Also the text blurred the periodization of the Risorgimento by not citing exact years of events and by removing the title 'Il Risorgimento'. This illustrates that De Vecchi and pro-monarch Fascists' principal concern was to link the Savoy family with the Risorgimento rather than to precisely periodize history.

<sup>77</sup> De Vecchi, 'Il senso della', pp. 443-48; Cesare Maria De Vecchi, *Educazione nazionale* (Rome: [n.pub.], 1935).

Risorgimento, the Great War (Interventionism and 'heroic' war efforts), and Fascism. There is no consideration of the linkage between historical ages in his historiography.<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, even though he officially stated that history was an ongoing process and historical research should be scientific as well as loyal to Fascism,<sup>79</sup> his historical view badly affected the Fascist school textbook's history. The narrative of modern ages (after the Renaissance) in the text focuses on consolidating the genealogical line of Fascism descended from the Risorgimento (the unification and independent movement) and World War I; it omits almost all other periods. Except for some famous men of culture, *condottieri* and sailors who showed the 'greatness' of the Italian people, anything unrelated to patriotism or military events is hardly mentioned in the textbook account before the eighteenth century and in Liberal Italy. On the one hand, this makes the Risorgimento, the First World War and Fascism look as a continuous organic epoch in the textbook, the seventeenth century, the Enlightenment and the Liberal era on the other hand seem to barely exist or become historically negligible.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4. *Italianità* and the Catholic Church

What then is the Fascist version of *Italianità*? Roughly, *Italianità* means the essence of Italian spiritual or moral value. The problem is in defining what authentic Italian 'spiritual' values are. In spite of their frequent use of the word, Fascist intellectuals scarcely come to a clear definition. Yet, there was a general tendency to assign every virtue conceived as good to *Italianità* in the Fascist discourse of history. Many Fascist historiographies therefore equated *Italianità* with *Romanità*, the Risorgimento's spirit and Fascism; devotion to family, nation and state, diligent work ethics, sacrifice, discipline, respect for order and hierarchy, bravery, frugality, creativity, unity, and love of the fatherland and so on.<sup>81</sup> The historiography in the Fascist school textbook was no different. However, a distinguishing feature in the textbook's connotation of *Italianità* is,

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> De Vecchi, 'Il senso della', p. 448. Cesare Maria De Vecchi, 'Consegna', *Rassegnastorica del risorgimento* 20 (1933), p. x. Genovesi explains more about De Vecchi's stress on the need for 'scientific and objective' historical studies though he reads it uncritically. See P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 71–73.

<sup>80</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 133–205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 129–204.

<sup>81</sup> Gentile, *Fascismo e cultura*, pp. 70–75; De Francisci, *Spirito della civiltà*, pp. 29–32; Ercole, *Dal nazionalismo*, pp. 195–96.

Catholicism. The Fascist textbook propagates Catholicism (with its institutional hierarchy) as a part of the 'spiritual' tradition of Italy.<sup>82</sup>

Anti-clericalism was particularly strong in the early stage of the Fascist movement, and remained so in the *Ventennio*; some Fascists did not hesitate to express their anti-clerical attitude.<sup>83</sup> Gentile was in general an opponent of the Vatican and the Pope though he conceded the usefulness of religious virtues in education and was sympathetic to Christianity. Balbino Giuliano, a gentilian philosopher and another Minister of National Education (1929-1932) in Mussolini's government, even accused Christianity of undermining the spiritual tradition of Rome. He argued that the Church failed to successfully takeover from the Roman Empire in keeping order, authority and stability.<sup>84</sup> Unlike them, De Vecchi was not only pro-Catholic but also had good ties with the Church itself. It was his and pro-Church faction's view that the textbook accepted. Apparently this was a political choice of the regime to appease the Vatican. After the Lateran Pact in 1929, Mussolini assigned De Vecchi as the ambassador to the Holy See, and the *quadrumvir* subsequently assumed control over academic historical institutions and the Ministry of National Education. So it was not a coincidence that De Vecchi backed historical research to examine the neo-Guelph movement in the Risorgimento and championed the Catholic Church's contribution in history to advocate the *Italianità* of Catholicism.<sup>85</sup>

This pro-Vatican and pro-Catholic attitude was reflected in the textbook in the following ways; no comment (and no criticism) of negative aspects of the Church, praise for the Church's role in preserving order, civilisation and the *Italianità* in the late Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages, and the emphasis on the Pope's 'spiritual' leadership (specifically Pius IX) of faithful Catholic patriots during the Risorgimento.<sup>86</sup> I will explain more about the other two cases in subsequent chapters and here give an example of the third from the textbook account:

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<sup>82</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 145-47; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-96.

<sup>83</sup> John Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian fascism 1929-1932: a study in conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 10.

<sup>84</sup> Balbino Giuliano, *Elementi di cultura fascista* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1933), pp. 46-48. On Gentile's anti-clerical attitude, refer to Pollard, *The Vatican and*, pp. 39-40 and 63-64.

<sup>85</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, pp. 173-74; Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, pp. 158-62. For De Vecchi's pro-Catholic stance, see De Vecchi, 'Il senso della', pp. 440 and 442.

<sup>86</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 145-47; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-96; *Libro V classe* (1931), pp. 154-55; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-98, 154-56; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 130.

"A group of thinkers and writers, who were called *neoguelphs*, [...] wanted to make the Pope the founder and leader of the renewal of our Fatherland, [...]. The Neoguelph's plan appeared close to being achieved when in 1846 the Cardinal Giovanni Mastai Ferretti was elected Pope with the name Pius IX, and with his first acts raised great hopes: he granted amnesty to political prisoners, granted greater press freedom, and established a civic militia. The citizens of Rome greeted the pontiff with jubilation and approval. [...] and the whole Peninsula reverberated with the cry: 'Long live Pius IX!' [...] Pius IX's example was followed by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Leopold II and Carlo Alberto."<sup>87</sup>

In the end, the textbook's history narrative tried to show that Rome, the Church, the Risorgimento and Fascism kept *Italianità* alive and passed it on one after another.

##### 5. *Romanità* and Italy's mission to civilise the world

It is well known that Ancient Rome was the most commonly cited historical reference point by Fascists; there are hundreds, or maybe thousands of Fascist intellectuals, politicians, ideologues and scholars who have read Roman history on behalf of Fascism. As we have seen, Fascism's concept of *Romanità*, the idealised image of Rome and Romans as a model for a 'new' Italy, derived from Fascist intellectuals' reading of Roman history. Pietro De Francisci's historiography was the most representative case of this.

De Francisci, a jurist and historian of Roman law, served as a Fascist deputy and Minister of Justice (1932~35). He was nominated as Giovanni Gentile's successor as the head of the National Institute of Fascist Culture (previously the National Fascist Institute of Culture) in 1937. De Francisci is regarded as one of the most enthusiastic propagandists and intellectual defenders of the Fascist concept of *Romanità* by later day historians.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Un gruppo di pensatori e di scrittori, che furono detti *neoguelphi*, [...] volevano fare del Papa l'iniziatore e il capo del rinnovamento della Patria nostra, [...]. Il programma dei neoguelphi parve prossimo a realizzarsi quando nel 1846 fu eletto Papa il cardinale Giovanni Mastai Ferretti, col nome di Pio IX, e questi con i suoi primi atti di governo suscitò grandi speranze: concesse l'amnistia ai condannati politici, accordò una maggiore libertà di stampa ed istituì una milizia civica. Grandi manifestazioni di giubilo e di plauso furono fatte al Pontefice dai cittadini di Roma. [...] e tutta la Penisola echeggiò del grido: *Viva Pio IX!* [...] L'esempio di Pio IX fu seguito dal granduca di Toscana Leopoldo II e da Carlo Alberto." *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 154-55.

<sup>88</sup> Visser, 'Pax Augusta', p. 114.

His idea of *Romanità* was identical to the typical image of Rome and Romans which the regime publicly presented. He insisted that diligence, austerity, order, discipline, respect of authority, devotion to family and subordination of individuals to the State, were the quintessence of *Romanità*, whose modern-day heir was Fascism.<sup>89</sup> This view was undoubtedly a core message in the school textbook historiography. In all editions of the fourth grade text, heroic individual Romans are often hailed as the incarnation of these virtues and great achievements of the Republic or the Empire are explained due to 'true' Roman characteristics, *Romanità*.<sup>90</sup>

However, Roman history not only provided Fascist thinkers with an ideal model for Fascist Italy and for Fascist Italians. It was also a guide to and at the same time justification for Fascism's aggressive colonial policy and expansionism. Behind this, there was the idea of Italy's mission to defend the Mediterranean and to civilise the world.<sup>91</sup> The main proponent of this idea was Ettore Pais.

Pais was one of the leading historians of Ancient Rome and had a great international reputation for his academic achievements in the 1910s. In substance, he was a nationalist rather than a Fascist and never seriously participated in the Fascist government or party politics. Nevertheless, he supported Mussolini's government once Fascism seized power and was on good terms with the regime until his death. Furthermore, Pais was such an adored and celebrated scholar in the field of classical antiquity that his contemporaries engaged in writing Roman history could hardly avoid reading or referring to his works.<sup>92</sup>

It is not easy to exactly pinpoint Pais's influence on the Fascist *Romanità*. Yet recent studies identify his legacy in two ways. First, Pais was the ultimate Italian scholar who brought together the nationalist interpretation of antiquity with rigorous academic standards, and proved a huge success. Consequently, Pais gave the Italian nationalist reading of Roman history some objective

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<sup>89</sup> De Francisci, *Spirito della civiltà*, pp. 29-31, 37-39.

<sup>90</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 99-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 130-92.

<sup>91</sup> Dogliani, *Il Fascismo degli italiani*, pp. 247-52.

<sup>92</sup> Mariella Cagnetta, 'Pais e il nazionalismo' in *Aspetti della storiografia di Ettore Pais*, ed. by Leandro Polverini (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2002), pp. 77-94; Giovanna Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece: Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 223-30, 244-45; Jan Nelis, *From ancient to modern: the myth of Romanità during the ventennio fascista* (Brussel-Rome: Belgian Historical Institute in Rome, 2011), pp. 161-68.



credentials in the sense that serious research claimed Ancient Rome as a part of Italian history without necessarily damaging academic credibility.<sup>93</sup>

His second legacy is related to the Fascist claim of Italy's 'civilising mission'; the idea that Italy had a historical destiny to spread the civilising force of *Romanità* (and *Italianità*) into the world. In fact, this idea was the brainchild of Mazzini and widely disseminated among cultured classes in Liberal Italy. It was however Pais and other nationalist or Fascist scholars inspired by him who mingled this idea with Italy's need of territorial expansion. Pais argued that Italy inherited the superior moral values and wisdom of the Romans and should acquire more colonies, not only for its material and demographic needs, but also for the interest of other Mediterranean peoples.<sup>94</sup> The Fascist regime developed this argument into a justification for its imperialism and an excuse for invasions of foreign territories. This propagandistic use of the 'civilising mission' argument was ultimately imposed on the textbook.<sup>95</sup>

Despite these common arguments in the Fascist *Romanità*, however, Fascist interpretations of Roman history were not always homogeneous. The decline of the Roman Empire was one of the focal points debated in Fascist historiographies. There were varied explanations about Rome's collapse among Fascists and De Francisci again provided the most common Fascist explanations on this question. De Francisci pointed out three causes; the collapse of the frontier defence thanks to massive influx of 'barbarians' into the Roman army, the 'decadence' of Romans (obsession for luxury, pleasure-seeking life style, materialism, adultery, evasion of childbirth etc.) and the impact of false ideologies such as universalism and individualism.<sup>96</sup> The first two were specified in the school textbook:

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<sup>93</sup> Cagnetta, 'Pais e il nazionalismo'; Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece*, pp. 223–30.

<sup>94</sup> Ettore Pais, *Imperialismo romano e politica italiana* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1920); Visser, 'Pax Augusta', pp. 111–15; Fabrizio De Donno, 'Orientalism and Classicism: The British-Roman Empire of Lord Bryce and His Italian Critics', in *Tributary Empires in Global History*, ed. by Peter Fibiger Bang and Christopher Bayly (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 48–73 (pp. 63–69).

<sup>95</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 199–204; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 184–90. The textbook historiography in the late 1930s' edition justified the Ethiopian War both as an effort to civilise the semi-'barbarous' indigenous people and as Italy's legitimate act for its territorial need and self-defence against other empires' (Britain, France) aggression. By the same token, Italy's intervention in the Spanish Civil War and the annexation of Albania were advocated in the later edition.

<sup>96</sup> De Francisci, *Spirito della civiltà*, pp. 192–204.

"[...] The population were unaccustomed to bearing arms, due to the widespread habit of enlisting under barbarian flags and entrusting them with supreme command too, [...] the Western Roman Empire collapsed [...]."<sup>97</sup>

"Wealth and wellbeing ended up making many citizens lazy and slothful; the craving for luxury and pleasure drove many to avarice and foolish and worthless wastefulness; [...] For these reasons, the power of Rome began to weaken."<sup>98</sup>

But why was the last argument omitted? The answer also lies in the textbook. The textbook's description of the centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire is absolutely favourable to the Catholic Church. It not only lauds the Church as the sole protector of Roman people and civilisation but also underscores the Church's (especially Pope Gregory I's) role in converting barbarians and making Christianity the universal spirit of Europeans.<sup>99</sup> Thus if universalism or any cosmopolitan value is blamed for degeneration of the Roman virtues, it would seem self-contradictory to exalt the universality of Catholicism in the same text.

#### 6. Heroism in the Cult of 'proto' Fascists

Innumerable historical figures were celebrated by the Fascists but only a few of them were regarded as 'forefathers' of Fascism or 'proto' Fascists. In the school textbook, even fewer men in history were praised as 'spiritual' progenitors of Fascism. Most historical figures in the text were mentioned because they either demonstrated the greatness of the Italian people (Petrarch, Da Vinci, Columbus, Galilei etc.), were exemplary cases of patriotism (Regulus, Menotti etc.), or were charismatic political leaders like the Duce (Caesar, Augustus, Garibaldi etc.). Hence, Giuseppe Mazzini and Francesco Crispi were included in the textbook as they were rare

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<sup>97</sup> "[...] disabituatisi i cittadini alle armi per il costume invalso di arruolare sotto le insegne i barbari e di affidare loro anche i supremi comandi, [...] l'Impero romano d'Occidente crollò [...]" *Libro V classe* (1931/7), p. 91.

<sup>98</sup> "La ricchezza, il benessere finirono per rendere molti cittadini oziosi e infingardi; il desiderio del lusso e del godimento spinse molti all'avidità del denaro e allo sperpero sciocco e inutile; [...] Per queste ragioni la potenza romana cominciò a indebolirsi." *Libro IV classe* (1932), p. 143.

<sup>99</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-96; *Libro V classe* (1931/7), pp. 91-96. For more analysis and discussions of these textbook pages, refer to the paragraphs between note no. 57 and 61 in Chapter III and between note no. 107 and 118 in Chapter IV of this thesis.

examples of men who were both widely worshiped by the Fascists as inspirational figures in Fascist politics. In this respect, Gentile's interpretation of Mazzini and Francesco Ercole's judgement of Crispi are noteworthy.

In fact, Gentile's assessment of Mazzini and interpretation of Mazzinian thought were also a part of his efforts to associate Fascism with the Risorgimento. He insisted that Mazzini was the spiritual core as well as the greatest 'prophet' of the Risorgimento and the ideological father of Fascism.<sup>100</sup> Undoubtedly, Gentile was not the only Fascist who praised Mazzini. As one historian explained, many elements of Mazzini's ideology exerted a great influence on Fascism, not only on Gentile's philosophy.<sup>101</sup> Gentile is significant in that he was the pioneer who sought to uncover Fascism's ideological inherence of the Risorgimento in Mazzini and other Fascists subsequently followed his reading of Mazzini to legitimize their movement.<sup>102</sup> Gentile claimed various ideas from Mazzini as precursors to Fascism. Amongst them, these two are noteworthy examples relating to the history in the textbook; religious perception of politics and the concept of 'thought and action'. The Fascist philosopher was convinced that the essence of Mazziniism was 'religious' devotion to the Fatherland and that Fascism centred on faith in the Italian nation-state.<sup>103</sup> Close attention was also given to Mazzinian notion of 'thought and action'. Mazzini inspired people with his great ideal and devoted his entire life to its implementation. He was a great visionary who understood the power of an inspiring idea and the importance of will to realise it; this was the Mazzini that Gentile interpreted. Therefore, for Gentile, who believed that one of the fundamental reasons for Liberal Italy's decadence was the lack of an ideal and the will to act, Fascism was able to claim spiritual inheritance of this Mazziniism because it proposed a great vision for the nation's future and the regime willingly enacted it (even using violence if necessary). Gentile imprinted his mark on history in the school textbook with these interpretations of Mazzini. It would be sufficient to quote some phrases in the text as the evidence (highlights in all five quotations by myself):

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<sup>100</sup> G. Gentile, *I profeti del Risorgimento*, pp. 11-82; G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, p. 161.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 165; Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*, p. 27.

<sup>103</sup> G. Gentile, *I profeti del Risorgimento*, pp. 11-82; G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, pp. 33-35, 57-58.

"Giuseppe Mazzini [...] had decided to **devote his life to** the salvation of **the Fatherland**. [...] but he never tired of fighting for the cause of Italy **with religious fervour**. [...] Mazzini, in 1831, founded a new secret society, which he called, <Young Italy>."<sup>104</sup>

"And young people welcomed Giuseppe Mazzini's words **with ardent faith and gave their noble lives to the Fatherland**."<sup>105</sup>

"Benito Mussolini carried out a highly **effective operation with words**, writing and work [...]. He founded the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* in Milan [...]. Many Fascists were veterans of the Great War and **offered their lives to Italy** again [...]. **The sacred ground of the Fatherland was bathed in the** generous **blood** of 3,000 Fascists."<sup>106</sup>

"[...] In this way, the new generations grow up in **the faith of God and the Fatherland**, ready to defend Italy and Fascism with all of their energy."<sup>107</sup>

"[...] **The heroes and martyrs of the Risorgimento, the Great War, and the Fascist Revolution** made the Fatherland free, united, prosperous and strong."<sup>108</sup>

However, we should not forget that Gentile's Mazzini was distorted by the philosopher's belief in Fascism. In short, he selectively claimed some ideas of Mazzini as proto-Fascist and ignored or criticised others which appeared incompatible with Fascism. For instance, Gentile once opposed Mazzini's ideal of fraternity and well-meaning cooperation between nations saying that

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<sup>104</sup> "Giuseppe Mazzini [...] aveva deciso di consacrare la vita alla redenzione della Patria.[...] ma non si stancò mai di propugnare con religioso fervore la causa italiana. [...] Mazzini fondò nel 1831 una nuova società segreta, che chiamò <La Giovine Italia>."; *Libro III classe* (1931), pp. 215-16.

<sup>105</sup> "Ed i giovani accolsero con fede ardente le parole di Giuseppe Mazzini, e diedero la loro nobile vita alla Patria."; *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>106</sup> "Benito Mussolini svolse un'efficacissima azione con le parole, con gli scritti, con le opere, [...] fondò a Milano i Fasci Italiani di Combattimento[...]. Molti tra i fascisti erano reduci dalla grande guerra, ed ora offrivano di nuovo la vita all'Italia [...] Il sacro suolo della Patria fu bagnato dal sangue generoso di ben 3000 fascisti."; *Ibid.*, pp. 317-19.

<sup>107</sup> "[...] Così le nuove generazioni crescono nella fede in Dio e nella Patria, preparate a difendere con tutte le energie l'Italia e il Fascismo [...]"; *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>108</sup> "Gli eroi ed i martiri del Risorgimento, della grande guerra, della Rivoluzione Fascista hanno fatto la Patria libera, unita, prospera e forte."; *Ibid.*, p. 327.

the dream of peaceful co-existence was “abstract humanity” and contradicted Mazzini’s own concept of “spiritual life as a struggle”.<sup>109</sup> The Fascist school textbook also deals with Mazzini in the same way and completely removes any comment on his opposition to the Savoyard monarchy, his intransigent republicanism and radical egalitarianism between nations, races and genders.<sup>110</sup>

Francesco Ercole, historian of political and legal thought, was involved in the regime’s monopolisation of school textbooks and became a Fascist deputy (1929–39), Minister of National Education (1932–35), and the president of the National Fascist Institute of Culture in the late 1920s. He produced innumerable writings, speeches and public lectures to defend Fascism using his broad knowledge of the history of political ideas from ancient times to Liberal Italy and remained loyal to Fascism even at the end of Salò Republic.<sup>111</sup>

Despite his laborious work, Ercole’s interpretation of history as a whole looks like a banal version of Fascist historiography. His view of Roman history is no different from Pais’s and De Francisci’s. His general assessment of the medieval era and the Renaissance is in keeping with what we expect from Fascist historiography. His overall conception of the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy also seems nearly the same as Gentile’s.<sup>112</sup> However, Ercole’s strength is the study of specific historical figures. In fact, many of his major historical works, specifically produced during the *Ventennio*, concentrate on historical figures rather than events or the vicissitudes of history. So, his major contribution to the Fascist version of history was to establish the lauded image of historical figures such as Dante, Machiavelli, Alfredo Oriani and Francesco Crispi.<sup>113</sup>

Among these men, only Dante and Crispi were presented in textbooks as Ercole had interpreted them. Oriani never appeared and Machiavelli was mentioned only by name.<sup>114</sup> Dante was presented in the text as not only a literary genius but also the champion of a united Italy and

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<sup>109</sup> G. Gentile, *Politica e cultura*, II, pp. 316–37 (quoted in E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, p. 173).

<sup>110</sup> *Libro III classe* (1931/7), pp. 215–18/65–67; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 70–71; *Libro V classe* (1931/7), pp. 152–53; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 150–52. These pages are about Mazzini and Young Italy in the textbooks. For more about the Fascist textbook’s treatment of Mazzini’s republicanism and hostility to monarchy, see paragraphs around note no. 234, 235 and 248 in Chapter IV of this thesis.

<sup>111</sup> *Historical Dictionary*, p. 184.

<sup>112</sup> One of the clearest examples is Ercole, *Dal nazionalismo*.

<sup>113</sup> Here are some examples; Francesco Ercole, *La politica di Machiavelli* (Rome: Anonima, 1926); Francesco Ercole, *Il pensiero politico di Dante*, 2 vols (Milan: Alpes, 1927–8); Francesco Ercole, *La personalità storica e il pensiero politico di Francesco Crispi: Discorso inaugurale letto nell’Aula magna* (Palermo: Montaina, 1928); Francesco Ercole, *Pensatori e uomini d’azione* (Milan: Mondadori, 1935).

<sup>114</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 132.

a visionary promoter of harmony between civil liberty and the Church.<sup>115</sup> In the words of Ercole, this was evidence that Dante was “a direct precursor of contemporary nationalists”.<sup>116</sup> Ercole, certainly, was neither the only nor the first Fascist who paid tribute to Crispi. Gentile, Volpe, Mussolini and many other Fascists also did.<sup>117</sup> However, no other Fascist intellectual was as zealous in preaching this old garibaldian veteran as a forerunner of Fascism in both quantity and quality.<sup>118</sup> For instance, Ercole said:

“As such, he [Crispi] is one of the authors of the Risorgimento: [...] it has been resumed today and continues with the renewed vigour of its origins, from May 1915 to the Fascist regime. [...], now another one [legend] is substituting the former: the legend of Crispi, a great statesman, the only one, which Italy had before Mussolini, [...] and of Crispi, an immediate and direct *precursor* of Fascism, [...] that is, a Fascist *before there was Fascism*.”<sup>119</sup>

Thanks to Ercole’s assessment, the Fascist school textbook therefore handled Crispi in a positive manner. Crispi was one of the only two post-unification Premiers mentioned in the textbook (the other was Giovanni Giolitti but negatively treated) and was applauded for his ‘patriotic’ ideal and policy:

“Alone and great, in the midst of incomprehension of many, Francesco Crispi emphasised the need for our colonial dominion.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 218–19.

<sup>116</sup> Ercole, *Pensatori e uomini*, pp. 13–38 (quotation in p. 18) or Ercole, *Il pensiero politico*.

<sup>117</sup> G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrine*, pp. 8–9; Volpe, *Il Risorgimento dell'Italia*, pp. 237–40; Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, II, 201.

<sup>118</sup> Ercole, *La personalità storica*; Ercole, *Pensatori e uomini*, pp. 297–389.

<sup>119</sup> “Come tale, Egli è uno dei fattori del Risorgimento nazionale: [...] si è ripreso oggi, e continua col ripristinato vigor delle origini, dal maggio del 1915 al moto e al regime fascista. [...], ora, sostituendo un'altra, in antitesi alla prima: la leggenda di un Crispi grandissimo uomo di Stato, dell'unico che, prima di Mussolini, l'Italia abbia avuto, [...] e di un Crispi *precursore* immediato e diretto del Fascismo, [...] cioè, fascista *avanti lettera*.” Ercole, *Pensatori e uomini*, pp. 351–52 (Italics by Ercole).

<sup>120</sup> “Solo e grande, in mezzo all'incomprensione di molti, Francesco Crispi metteva in risalto al necessità del nostro dominio coloniale.”; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 172.

## 7. Myths of the birth of Fascism

The appeal of the Fascist history narrative resides not only in its interpretation of facts but also in mythicisation. Many of the Fascist myths are related to the birth or early days of the movement. Among them, the myth of 'purifying' war and Fascist martyrdom are adopted in the school textbook. The myth of 'purifying war' was the most obvious product of Italian nationalism. It is sometimes tricky to distinguish nationalist influences from genuine Fascist ideas. It is not simply because the Italian Nationalist Association (*Associazione Nazionalista Italiana*) merged with the Fascist party and dissolved in 1923, but also because many notable nationalists hugely affected the Fascist movement or the regime before and after the merger. Gabriele D'Annunzio taught Mussolini the art of demagoguery. Enrico Corradini inspired Fascists with his ideas of the proletarian nation, populism, and Corporatism. Luigi Federzoni and Alfredo Rocco served for Mussolini's cabinet and paved the way towards the totalitarian state by fortifying the authority and power of the government with legal and administrative measures.<sup>121</sup> Historiography was no exception. Most Fascist historians and ideologues mentioned above or mentioned later, Gentile, Volpe, Pais, Ercole and Arrigo Solmi, were initially nationalists or nationalist sympathisers. However, the notion of war as a vehicle to renew the nation was definitely formed by nationalists before the birth of Fascism and was later implanted into Fascist historiography.

The purifying war myth is: the idea that the Italian nation gradually lost the Risorgimento spirit's vigour after the unification and deserted its historical mission to be a leading country and civilise the world. To go through the extreme test of the war, immense bloodshed and devastation, according to the myth, would revitalise the Risorgimento spirit and redirect the nation on its right historical path.<sup>122</sup> This idea first emerged in a recognisable form in nationalist discourses around the Italo-Turkish War (the Libyan War, 1911–12) and was then extensively diffused during the First World War by Interventionist and the military authority's propaganda. From then on, the Great War, not colonial wars, became the final step to accomplish the

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<sup>121</sup> De Donno, 'Orientalism and Classicism', pp. 63–64; Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), pp. 415–19; Richard J. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Dictatorship* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 49–50, 110–12; Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo*, pp. 233–36; *Dictionary of Modern Italian*, p. 208.

<sup>122</sup> Emilio Gentile, 'The Myth of National Regeneration in Italy: From Modernist Avant-garde to Fascism', in *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, ed. by Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 25–45.

Risorgimento.<sup>123</sup> Fascism imported this idea conveniently by including itself as the consequence of the 'reawakened' Risorgimento spirit by the war.

Without doubt, some elements of this myth, such as 'sacrificial blood', 'heroic death', and 'hardened national unity by suffering', had already existed in nineteenth-century Italy.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, it was nationalists in the subsequent century who mingled these components with the new concept of the war. The war was a means to cleanse the nation, to destroy the old habits and order, and eventually to rejuvenate the country. D'Annunzio's two poems released in 1911, patriotic statements and columns in the cultural nationalist journal, *La Voce* during the Libyan War, and Federzoni's speech in 1915 all demonstrate this.<sup>125</sup> Yet, the best example was probably Corradini's celebration of Italy's annexation of Libya in 1912. In a book titled, *On the roads of the new empire*, he defines the war as "the innovative force" saying that:

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<sup>123</sup> E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 65-66 and 87.

<sup>124</sup> Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*, pp. 51-93.

<sup>125</sup> Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'La canzone d'oltremare', in his *Laudi del cielo del mare della terra e degli eroi libro 4: Merope* (Verona: Istituto nazionale per la edizione di tutte le opere di Gabriele D'Annunzio, 1929), pp. 3-10 (originally released in *Corrieredella sera*, 8 October 1911); Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'La canzone del sangue', in his *Laudi del cielo: Merope*, pp. 13-22 (initially published in *Corrieredella sera*, 22 October 1911); Giovanni Amendola, 'Il convegno nazionalista', *La Voce*, 1 December 1910; Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'Il risveglio italiano', *La Voce*, 30 Mar 1911; Emanuele Sella, 'Per il regime delle terre in Tripolitania', *La Voce*, 2 Nov 1911. Luigi Federzoni's speech at the memorial service for Bruno Garibaldi who was a grandson of Giuseppe Garibaldi and killed in action for the Italian voluntary troop in the French Army, delivered in January 1915; "Italy has awaited this since 1866 her truly national war, in order to feel unified at last, renewed by the unanimous action and identical sacrifice of all her sons. Today, while Italy still wavers before the necessity imposed by history, the name of Garibaldi, re-sanctified by blood, rises again to warn her that she will not be able to defeat the revolution save by fighting and winning her national war."; quotation and translation in John Thayer, *Italy and the Great War: Politics and culture, 1870-1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 253. For more about nationalists' myth of 'a war as the cure of social malaise', look Mario Isnenghi, *Il mito della grande guerra: da Marinetti a Malaparte* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1970), pp. 7-69, 169-246.



"War [...] is the force that renews social institutions which tend to die or decline during the development period and conservative period of peace [...]."<sup>126</sup>

With the advent of Fascism, the regenerative war myth evolved further, flourished and became a central theme in historiography. World War I was the perfect stage to set Fascism's drama of the national redemption. In this story, the 'decadent' nation was sanctified by enduring enormous ordeals and the shedding of the blood of numerous martyrs during the war. As a result of this suffering, the ultimate saviour, Fascism and Mussolini, arrived and the nation resuscitated its great spirit under the Duce's leadership. After all, the textbook narrative of the Great War is this combination of Fascist self-embellishment, with the cult of the Risorgimento, patriotism, and religious languages, metaphor and storylines.<sup>127</sup>

Besides nationalists, Fascist squadristism exerted influence upon the Fascist myth in historiography, though unlike nationalism it was a part of Fascism from the start. From the early years of the movement, many local Fascist squad stories were produced in the form of journalist reports, squad members' memoirs or diaries and the local Fascist party's official publications. Many of them stressed and even exaggerated heroic struggles of the Fascist squads in their 'punitive' violent actions, and martyrs were frequently featured in these stories.<sup>128</sup> Obviously the rhetoric of martyrdom was often used in the Wars of Independence, colonial wars and the First World War before the Fascist squadristism. Yet the unique characteristic of Fascist squadristism was that it extended the metaphor of martyrs in patriotic wars into its own terror against 'social disease', that is, Fascist expeditions. So, if someone died for their faith in Fascism it was, for

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<sup>126</sup> "La guerra [...] è la forza che rinnova gli organismi sociali che attraverso il periodo organante e il periodo conservativo della pace tendono a morire e a corrompersi [...]."; Enrico Corradini, *Sopra le vie del nuovo impero: dal'emigrazione di Tunisi alla guerra nell'Egeo* (Milan: Treves, 1912), pp. 234.

<sup>127</sup> However, the concept of the 'decadent' nation is not explicitly cited in the textbook. This is because the entire history between the Wars of Independence and World War I (except colonial wars and the Savoyard family) is omitted from the text; *Libro III classe* (1931), pp. 291-310; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 100-117; *Libro V classe* (1931/7), pp. 186-96; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175-83.

<sup>128</sup> These are some examples; Mario Piazzesi, *Diario di uno squadrista toscano 1919-1920* (Rome: Bonacci, 1980); Raffaele Vicentini, *Diario di uno squadrista* (Venice: Zanetti, 1935); Enrico Portino, *Quattro anni di passione 1919-1923: artefici, martiri, gregari*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Turin: Edizione Piemonte, 1935; 1<sup>st</sup> edn 1923).

Fascists, as sacred as war martyrs who fought and died for their country.<sup>129</sup> The Fascist regime officially recognised this concept of Fascist martyrdom and enthusiastically patronised, embellished, and amplified stories of Fascist martyrs.<sup>130</sup> Although the regime also eagerly propagated glorious victories of Fascism's 'punitive war', it was not their triumph but their sacrifice which was more underlined in the school textbook's related paragraph:

"Many Fascists, were veterans of the Great War, and they again offered their lives to Italy in order to save it from its enemies within. It was a ferocious battle. The Fatherland's sacred soil was bathed in the generous blood of 3,000 Fascists, mostly victims of ambushes or traps which the subversives preferred [...]."<sup>131</sup>

#### 8. Archetype of Fascist historiographies: Arrigo Solmi

Surprisingly, it is hard to find a history book written by the Fascists which contains all of the main components in school textbook historiography mentioned above. Arrigo Solmi's work is such a rare example. Solmi was a notable historian and former nationalist. At the end of the World War I, he was attracted to Fascism and became a Fascist parliamentary member in 1924. More importantly, he served as a member of the Central Commission for the Textbook Examination and got involved in the introduction of the State school textbook in the 1920s. Later he was appointed as the Undersecretary of National Education in 1932 and became Minister of Justice (1935–39).<sup>132</sup>

Among well-known and influential Fascist intellectuals, Solmi was a very rare scholar who produced numerous historical works covering broad range of periods from ancient times to the Fascist era. Gentile, Volpe, Pais, De Francisci and Ercole were also very productive academics but none of them studied such a range of historical periods as Solmi. While Gentile, Volpe and

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<sup>129</sup> Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*, pp. 62–72; Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*, p. 202; Portino, *Quattro anni di passione*, pp. 41–43, 57–58.

<sup>130</sup> Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*, pp. 202 and 274.

<sup>131</sup> "Molti tra i fascisti erano reduci dalla grande guerra, ed ora offrivano di nuovo la vita all'Italia per salvarla dai suoi nemici interni. La lotta fu in fatti cruenta. Il sacro suolo della Patria fu bagnato dal sangue generoso di ben 3000 fascisti, per lo più caduti vittima delle imboscate e delle insidie che i sovversivi preferivano[...]"; *Libro III classe* (1931/7), p. 319. Similar remarks are also found in *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 119–2; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 182.

<sup>132</sup> On Solmi's involvement in the introduction of the state school textbook, see Ciampi, 'Il Risorgimento e la scuola', p. 380. For his Fascist political career, P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 36–37.

Ercole showed little interest in Roman history, Pais and De Francisci hardly contributed anything to the study of medieval and Renaissance history. However, it is not just because of the broad historical chronological coverage of Solmi's work that he is significant. His works contained all of the major elements of the textbook's Fascist historiography that we have seen above. For example, in his books, *Il Risorgimento italiano 1814-1918* and *Discorsi sulla storia d'Italia*, we can find; Gentile's 'Two Italies' (albeit in simpler form), elements of the 'historical continuity' thesis which recognises medieval Italian communes' economic development and civic autonomy, and achievements of post-Risorgimento Italy (together with the ambivalent judgement), efforts to link the Savoy with the origins of the Risorgimento, the Catholic Church's constructive role in history, the positive effects of the French Revolution, the idea of 'civilising mission', typical Fascist discourses of the *Romanità* and the cause of the Rome's collapse, emphasis on the spiritual importance of Mazzini, praise for Francesco Crispi, and even the nationalist myth of the 'purifying war'.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, Solmi's historiography is a synthesis of the main components of Fascist historiography. Also, considering his active involvement in the regime's monopolisation of the school textbook, it could be assumed that he provided a fundamental platform for the historiography in the Fascist school textbook.<sup>134</sup>

Yet Solmi did not only synthesise existing myths and ideas in Fascist historical discourses. He also added his own idea of militarism and an emphasis on national unity, which were particularly influential on history textbooks. In many historical cases, Solmi reasoned that military weakness was a principal cause of the nation's decline, and likewise, the nation's success depended on its

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<sup>133</sup> On 'Two Italies'; Arrigo Solmi, *Il Risorgimento italiano 1814-1922* (Milan: Federazione italiana biblioteche popolari, 1929), p. 175 (This book is the revised 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Il Risorgimento italiano 1814-1918*), quoted in P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 56. For medieval Italian communes see; Arrigo Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia d'Italia* (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1933), pp. 26-31 and 71. As for the connection between the Savoy and the Risorgimento; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. 23, 150. For the Church's positive role in history; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. 67-71. On the impacts of the French Revolution see; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. 24, 136-39. For 'Civilising mission' refer to; Arrigo Solmi, *The Making of Modern Italy* (London: Ernest Benn, 1925), pp. 210-12 (This book is the English translation of the revised edition of *Il Risorgimento italiano*). On the spiritual link of the *Romanità*-Risorgimento-Fascism; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. 70-72. For the Decline of Rome see; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. XLIV-XLVIII. On Mazzini; Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, p. xxxiii or Solmi, *The Making of Modern*, pp. 26-27. About Crispi; Solmi, *The Making of Modern*, pp. 149-52. On 'purifying war' myth refer to; Solmi, *The Making of Modern*, pp. 208-10.

<sup>134</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 35-36, 57-59.

military strength.<sup>135</sup> Unity too was highly underscored as a crucial virtue to lead the nation into independence, success and prosperity in his historiography.<sup>136</sup> The *Libro unico*'s historical narrative resembles his historiography in these respects. The textbook's history largely centred on military events, stressed militaristic virtues, and hailed numerous Italian heroes at war. Also the importance of the national unity was magnified in the book; unity of the social classes, harmony between the Church and State, collaboration between employers and employees and so forth.<sup>137</sup>

## Conclusion

The liberal regimes had attempted to establish a national identity through history education in order to make Tuscans, Venetians, Neapolitans, Sicilians, etc. feel like Italians. Fascists knew this well but they insisted that the liberal effort had failed to achieve this goal because liberalism was an inappropriate ideology for *Italianità*. Once Fascism replaced liberal governments, the regime suggested a new national identity by differentiating its own history education, historiography and concept of history from the liberal version. What then was the new national identity which the regime sought to construct?

The ultimate national identity that Fascism tried to forge was not solely about the Italian national conscience. It also demanded a new model for the nation-state with which Italians could identify themselves. So, Fascism promoted a 'new' Italy under its rule that was a fully modernised superpower and Mediterranean empire with vast colonies, strong armed forces and a prosperous economy and culture. Citizens of this new Italy, the regime envisaged, were hard-working, austere, patriotic, faithful in Fascism during peacetime, and obedient, valiant, and sacrificial during wartime. This model for new Italy and Italians was clearly associated with the Fascist interpretation of *Romanità*, Roman history and *Italianità*. It was not completely immune from the view of Romantic historicism in the liberal era but was fundamentally based on the Fascist conception of history.

However, because Fascist historiography was neither unitary nor homogeneous, establishing a distinctive system of Fascist history education was more complex than proposing a new national identity. Many diverse historical interpretations, hypotheses, representations and popular myths

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<sup>135</sup> Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*, pp. xlv, 22.

<sup>136</sup> Solmi, *The Making of Modern*, pp. 26, 51, 55, 62-63; Solmi, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, pp. 29, 38.

<sup>137</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 212-22; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 111-13, 117-18, 198.

coexisted under the name of Fascism, some of which seemed incompatible with each other. The regime, therefore, chose to construct a selective version of the past in order to form an official historiography for Fascist history education. A striking example is the Fascist debate on the historical 'continuity-discontinuity' of Fascism. As we can see in the Fascist school textbook, the regime chose the continuity thesis as its prime historical interpretation, but selectively embraced some elements of the discontinuity thesis as well. Although this manoeuvre looks like a solely opportunistic choice for propaganda, but it was not always the case. Sometimes it was motivated by the regime's genuine ideological convictions or was based on practical sense or logical thinking. In short, the Fascist historiography in education was the product of these mixed motivations.

Heterogeneity was a substantial feature of Fascist historiography used in education, also in terms of its core messages and method of presentation. Some historians had already verified the hybrid nature of Fascist presentation of history mainly in visual culture and have demonstrated that this was a source of Fascism's appeal.<sup>138</sup> Yet they have largely overlooked narrative presentations of history. This study argues that the textual historiography too was a reflection of the heterogeneous character of Fascist culture and was a bearer of Fascism's ideological appeal. The narrative form of Fascist historiography, like visual cultural products, was the fusion of rationality and a blind faith, of persuasive reasoning and undisguised propaganda, of progressive aspiration and conservative reaction, and of high culture and mass culture. History education is an ideal place to prove this because the principal material used in education is the textbook which conveys historiography in a narrative form and was consciously controlled by the Fascist regime.

Many Fascist intellectuals interpreted the nation's history from diverse points of view with different arguments, messages, intentions, narrative strategies and periodizations. As we have seen, various historical debates between them constituted the foundation of historiography in the Fascist school textbook; Giovanni Gentile's new conception of nation and history, the 'continuity' thesis which argued the medieval communes' economic development, civic autonomy and growth of the middle classes, the 'Two Italies' idea, royalist Fascist claim of an 'inseparable' relationship between the Savoy and the beginning of the Risorgimento, Catholicism as an *Italianità* with praise for the Church's role in history, belief in Italy's inheritance of *Romanità* and in the 'civilising mission', Rome as the ideal model of Fascist Italy, the exaltation of Mazzini as the 'spiritual'

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<sup>138</sup> Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary*; Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*; Marla S. Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1998).

father of Fascism, the cult of so-called ideological progenitors of Fascism like Francesco Crispi, the 'purifying war' myth and the Fascist exaggeration of martyrdom to consolidate the myth of 'Fascism as a saviour of the nation'. All these were found in Arrigo Solmi's historiography and passed on to the Fascist school textbook. Now, the next task of this thesis is to investigate how the main components of the Fascist historiography were combined in the textbook, and how effective the *Libro unico's* narrative history was as a result of such a combination. The following chapters will execute this task through a close reading and intensive analysis of the text.

## IV. Analysis of the Fascist School Textbooks

### 1: (Re)-defining the Nation and Nationality

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Some scholars have argued that the Fascist regime only enhanced patriotism or nationalism in primary school textbooks by making no distinction between service to the country and service to Fascism.<sup>1</sup> Arguably, the regime loaded more nationalistic values into the text in terms of subjects like *Lettura* (reading) and Religion rather than developing a new way to teach Fascism; to fabricate entertaining stories in which the ideal Fascist protagonist(s) was involved in a patriotic event or simply to insert a prayer for the nation and the Duce.<sup>2</sup> No elaborate reasoning was required to connect the Italian nation and Fascism. In Fascist history textbooks, however, more complex narrative structures and strategies were applied to this end. The regime employed a two-tier strategy; first redefining the Italian nation and national identity according to the Fascist conception, and then justifying Fascism's spiritual and moral inherence of this redefined *Italianità* through the nation's historical narrative. The present and subsequent chapter will examine this two-tier strategy one by one to closely analyse the Fascist history textbooks. They will be followed by quantitative analyses of messages and languages in the book to give the text analysis more concrete evidence. This approach will advocate the three main arguments of this study: first, Fascist history education was a reflection of complicated interactions and combinations between diverse political, cultural, or educational goals of the regime and educational discourses of the Fascists. Second, Fascism appropriated history education not only for propaganda purposes but also for nation-state building in its own right. Lastly, the regime's effort to construct a Fascistised nation-state through history education was not a totally new proclivity but a partial succession - though heavily distorted in a more extreme, chauvinistic and militant manner- of nationalistic culture and education in Europe in its narrative structures, strategies, thematic concerns, ideas, metaphor and use of illustrations.

Political scientists and historians of nationalism have commonly distinguished between civic nationalism and ethno-cultural nationalism. The former tends to emphasise civic institutions, law,

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<sup>1</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-83.

community, and the political will of a population, as the fundamental bonds which form a nation. On the other hand, the latter stresses more ethnic origins, race, common language and culture as the evidence of a distinctive nationality.<sup>3</sup> All nationalistic discourses or national identities, as Stephen Heathorn has argued, are composed of these two models of nationalism although the proportion depends on individual cases.<sup>4</sup> Fascism, as a distorted extreme nationalism, is not an exception as many ideological, political and cultural elements of Fascism descend from nationalism in the liberal era as we have seen in the previous chapters. Thus if Fascism attempted to complete the Italian nation-state and utilised history education as a means to do so, the Fascist regime's redefinition of the nation or national identity would also contain these two aspects of nationalism in its history school textbooks.

Yet Fascist history education is not all about inherited nationalism, either ethno-cultural or civic. It was also the unique features of Fascism which made an imprint on education. Hence the goal of this chapter is to demonstrate both the influences of nationalist (ethno-cultural and civic) tradition and Fascist elements in the historical discourse of the Italian nation and nationhood in the Fascist school textbook. For that purpose, this part of the thesis will engage in a comparative analysis between the *Libro unico* and its counterparts in other European countries, to better understand that the Fascist historical narrative in education was not the product of a revolutionary break from past practices, but was intricately interwoven with old and new discursive manners, themes, metaphors, and messages.

### **Ethno-cultural perceptions of the nation and nationhood**

#### **1. Language and culture**

Fascism's notion of the Italian nation or *Italianità* in textbooks largely relies on the ethno-cultural discourse of nationalism. The textbook typically explains to schoolchildren that Italianess is based upon the common language and culture of inhabitants in the Italian peninsula. This tendency is particularly noticeable in the medieval and pre-Risorgimento history. In the

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<sup>3</sup> For the distinction of nationalism into the two categories, see Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), pp. 8-12, 15; Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, p. 87. Although it is differently termed ('political' perception of the nation), what Alter defines is the same as civic nationalism that Heathorn calls.

<sup>4</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, pp. 87-88; Stephen Harp, *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998).



very opening page of the 1930s' fifth grade textbook, the end of ancient history and the beginning of the Middle Ages in Italy are explained with this phrase:

"With the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the glorious history of Rome and Roman civilisation did not end. The barbarians [...] were able to destroy numerous works of art created by the genius of our stock, [...] but they were unable to erase Rome's language and immortal laws."<sup>5</sup>

In order to claim the continuous existence of the Italian nation, despite the absence of a state named Italy in the Middle Ages, the textbook constantly underlines Italian language and culture as the essence of *Italianità*. We know that Italians, like most European nations, have never been genealogically homogeneous people, and the Italian nation is too diverse an entity to define racially. Even during medieval times, Italians as an ethnic entity were still in the making. Distinctive racial groups or various tribes came into the Italian peninsula or the surrounding islands and intermarried with previously settled inhabitants; the Goths, the Lombards, and the Saracens in the early Middle Ages, the Normans in the eleventh century, and French or Spaniard rulers later. All of these peoples are described in the Fascist textbook as 'invaders' and never included as the part of Italians' ethnic ancestry in the text. The textbook narration avoids mentioning intermarriage or racial integration and only references cultural and linguistic assimilations of these invaders into the Italic or Latin population. So it is not a coincidence that the only two racially non-Italic rulers, Theodoric the Great and Frederick II, are praised in the textbook since they were enthusiastic admirers and promoters of Roman-Latin culture.<sup>6</sup> By the same token, the author of the fifth grader's textbook argues that the Middle Ages is important in the nation's history not because the Italian race completed its formation then, but because "in that period our [the Italians'] sweet language and a clearly Italian [style of] art reached their full maturity".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Con la caduta dell'Impero d'Occidente, non finiva la storia gloriosa di Roma e della civiltà romana. I barbari [...] poterono distruggere molte opere d'arte create dal genio della nostra stirpe, [...] ma non riuscirono a fare sparire e dimenticare la lingua e le leggi immortali di Roma." *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-92.

<sup>6</sup> For the cultural assimilation of 'barbarians' see *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 92-93, 95. On Theodoric the Great and Frederick II, refer to *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 93, 114-15.

<sup>7</sup> "in quel periodo giungono alla piena maturità la nostra dolce lingua e un'arte schiettamente italiana." *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 92.

## 2. National characters

However, it was not unusual for national language and culture to form the core constituent of a nationality. It was a common way of building a national identity in the historiographies of nations which historically lacked their own unitary state or political independence but seemed to retain a relatively homogeneous language and culture like Germany, Poland, and Greece.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, in countries, such as Britain and France which maintained their political unity and independence for long periods, it was not difficult to see that language and culture were regarded as important building blocks of the national identity.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, in addition to emphasising language and culture, the Fascist school textbook employed other means of defining the nation or nationhood from the ethno-cultural point of view, that is, the discourse of national characters and Italo-centricity of the narrative.

Certainly the idea of national characters is not a genuine invention of Fascist historiography. It was a very typical and widely discussed theme in the discourse of Romantic (and later liberal) nationalism from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century in Europe.<sup>10</sup> In the Fascist case, the discourse of national character was not only a medium to advocate the greatness of the Italian nation but also a pivotal tool to link *Romanità* with *Italianità*, which was crucial to assert the longevity and continuity of the Italian nation's existence. I have in the previous chapters argued that Fascism aimed at forging a 'new' Italian national identity and proposed a 'new' model of ideal Italians for its totalitarian project. Yet this 'new' model was not solely based upon utterly new or alien ideas. The Fascist regime instead redefined certain selective moral values as the spiritual essence of *Romanità* and cast the history of Italy as a story of the succession of these values, from Ancient Rome to Fascism. In this context, the idea of a national character in the Fascist textbook's historiography is a useful concept to be claimed as an incarnation, carrier and transmitter of Roman values.

So, what attributes were defined by the Fascist textbook as the spiritual essence of *Romanità*? All editions of the fourth grader's, which cover ancient history, specify moral values like devotion to family and community, diligence, sacrifice, respect for order and hierarchy, bravery, frugality, honesty, creativity, love of liberty, justice and *Patria*, unity, virility, and tenacity as

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<sup>8</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, pp. 14–18.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Boyd, *Historia Patria*, p. 129; Breuilly, 'Nationalism and Historians', pp. 6–7.

authentic characters of Roman people. With these attributes, the books explicitly or tacitly repeat how the tiny and poor tribe of Romans built 'the greatest' civilisation:

"One of the smallest and poorest [peoples] in Italy in these ancient times were the Latin people [...]. They were few in number and poor [...] but had great virtues and moral qualities. They were hardworking, frugal, tenacious, with simple and honest morals, faithful to their word, loved their families, sincerely religious, and devoted to the concepts of justice, and rectitude. [...] through these characteristics, the small and poor Latin people not only became the greatest in the world but also gave to the world the highest form of civilisation."<sup>11</sup>

Such Roman traits, as the textbook's narration on medieval, pre-modern and modern history explains, frequently reappear within Italians' minds as the true *Italianità*, which is presented as the driving force behind the Italians' great historical achievements (including Fascism) and heroic struggles against foreign nations. Following the same logic, the *Libro unico* explained the fall of the Roman Empire and the nation's political division, factional conflicts and servitude to foreign rulers in such a way that the true virtues of the nation somehow temporarily faded away in people's thoughts.<sup>12</sup>

However, it is not only the use of the national characters concept which was heavily influenced by the tradition of European nationalist discourses but also Fascism's definition of Italian national characters. First of all, some traits that Fascism defined as Roman / Italian characteristics are almost identical to many other European countries' definitions of their nations in the historical or cultural narratives. It might be particularly useful to compare the British case in the climax of its imperialism and liberal nationalism with Fascist Italy. Many late Victorian and Edwardian school textbooks in Britain characterised Englishness (Britishness) as courage, honesty, justice,

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<sup>11</sup> "Uno dei più piccoli e più poveri in Italia era in questi antichissimi tempi quello dei Latini [...]. Erano poche e povere [...] ma avevano grandi virtù e grandi qualità morali. Erano laboriosi, frugali, tenaci, di semplici e puri costumi, onesti, fedeli alla parola data, amanti della famiglia, sinceramente religiosi, devoti a concetti di giustizia, e di rettitudine. [...] con esse e per esse il piccolo e povero popolo latino non solo divenne il più grande del mondo, ma diede al mondo le più alte forme di civiltà."; *Libro IV classe* (1932), p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91, 103, 117; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 212-13, 222.

patience, virility, order and love of liberty,<sup>13</sup> which seems quite similar to the Fascist conception of Italian virtues or *Italianità*. Moreover, explaining the origins of the national characters, the Fascist textbook adopted the same discursive manoeuvre that Victorian British schoolbooks employed; schoolbooks in Victorian and Edwardian Britain tended to attribute the good traits of Englishmen to the nation's presumed ethnic origins, i.e. the Anglo-Saxons. Equally, the Fascist school textbook proclaimed that every great Italian characteristic derived from their Roman / Latin ancestry. Also intriguingly, in both cases, school textbooks justified imperial expansionism by implying that historically 'proven' (with their great characters) superior nations like England or Italy were destined or duty-bound to 'civilise' other parts of the world.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, despite these similarities, there are fundamental differences between the two. While the Victorian history textbooks tried to connect their characterisation of the Englishness, no matter how much it relied on the ethno-cultural perception of nationhood, with the discourse of citizenship and expected duties from citizens,<sup>15</sup> the Fascist counterpart significantly lacked any discussion of citizenship. Instead, the Fascist textbook preferred using the words, '*figli d'Italia*' (children of Italy) or simply 'Italians' to 'citizens' or '*cittadinanza*' (citizenship) in the historiography of the post-Roman era.<sup>16</sup> Another discrepancy are their points of emphasis in the definition of national character. British schoolbooks at the turn of the century put more stress on the love of freedom, the will to self-govern, democracy and fairness as the essential moral traits of Englishmen. On the other hand, the Fascist text highlighted sacrifice, heroism, love of *Patria*, military valour, tenacity and obedience as the evidence of *Romanità* or *Italianità*. These differences are the consequence of Fascism's effort to differentiate itself from liberal education. Because Fascism denounced liberal moral values, the regime needed to stress different virtues as the quintessential character of the nation.

### 3. Italo-Roman centrality

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<sup>13</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, pp. 95, 104.

<sup>14</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>15</sup> Heathorn, *For Home, Country*, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> It is hard to see any exception for this in all editions of the Fascist textbooks. One of the very few cases is the phrase in the 1940's edition of the fifth grader in which the author briefly says that in Fascist Italy every citizen is a soldier and has the duty to defend the Fatherland. So, even in this rare exception, the author's aim is undoubtedly to emphasise the military duty of citizens than to inculcate democratic mindset, comradeship, and responsible behaviour of citizens; see *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 205.

The Italo-centricity of the narrative in the Fascist history textbooks can also be understood as the ethno-cultural discourse of the nation. The Roman Empire, as we know, was a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state. In order to imply that ancient Romans equated to modern Italians and that *Romanità* has the same connotation as *Italianità*, however, the Fascist textbook describes Roman history from an exclusively Italo-centric perspective, avoiding any clear mention of cosmopolitan aspects, especially in a positive sense, of the Roman world. For instance, the 1940s' fourth grader book depicts the construction of the empire as a unilateral process in which Roman citizens colonised and developed vast 'uncivilised' territories with their toil, blood and sweat, and disseminated the light of their civilisation to other, 'inferior' or 'barbarous', indigenous peoples.<sup>17</sup> The problem here is the ambiguity of 'Roman citizens'. Who were the 'citizens' of Rome? The Fascist textbook neither defines it nor explains the fact that Roman citizenship was given to all in the empire who met certain social, economic and cultural qualifications regardless of their racial background. Hence, schoolchildren were falsely told that Roman citizens were innate Romans or Italian inhabitants; they ruled other parts of the empire as subjugated colonies; and the whole empire was homogenised in Latin-Roman culture. This false impression was further reinforced by an account of negative 'foreign' influences on 'Roman' people. Summarising the aftermath of the Punic Wars and conquest of the Near East, the 1930s' edition of the fourth grader comments:

"[Rome] had come into contact with the luxurious, opulent, and corrupt life of big oriental cities. The obsession with luxury, [...] with all of life's pleasures resulted in wildness and weakness in many [Romans] so that the virtues of simplicity, the austere life, love for the family, honesty, and boldness of character were lost."<sup>18</sup>

In medieval history, as I have said, the Fascist textbook avoids mentioning the racial assimilation which occurred in the Italian peninsula, as it prefers to underscore that Italianness was already formed and existed in terms of culture and language. Basically the same discursive

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<sup>17</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 173-75.

<sup>18</sup> "[Rome] era venuta a contatto con la vita lussuosa, sfarzosa, corrotta delle grandi città orientali. La mania del lusso, [...] di ogni godimento della vita divenne in molti sfrenatezza e mollezza, sicchè le belle virtù antiche della semplicità, dell'austerità di vita, dell'amore alla famiglia, dell'onesta, della fierezza di carattere andarono perdendosi."; *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 121-22.

manoeuvre is also found in the textbook's Italo-centric narrative of Roman history. Although the 1930s' Fascist schoolbook states the multi-ethnic origins of the Romans admitting that not only the Latins but also various cohabitant peoples in the peninsula, such as the Etruscans, the Umbrians, the Sabines, and the Ligurians etc., formed the Roman people in its early days, it completely ignores the constant influx of other ethnic groups from outside of the peninsula into the Roman society, and the consequential racial integration or assimilation, especially in the centuries of the imperial Rome.<sup>19</sup> So, while ignoring the positive effects of imported exotic cultures, the omission of racial fusions in the Roman world helped the textbook's Italo-centric account to delude children into thinking that only the Latin-speaking Italics and their original cultures and customs represented the *Romanità*.

#### 4. Comparison to Nazi textbooks

The question could be asked: if the Fascist history textbook has some similarities and differences with the liberal ethno-cultural nationalist discourse, how does it compare with the Nazi history education? What are the similarities and differences between Fascism and Nazism in their textbooks' ethno-cultural accounts on the nation(s)?

History education in Nazi Germany relied heavily on an ethno-cultural concept of the nation, like their Fascist counterpart. The Nazi history textbooks are convinced of the inseparability between Germanness and the supposedly superior cultural and moral values of the nation, proudly categorising the Germans as a 'culture-creator' race.<sup>20</sup> Also the narrative of Nazi history textbooks is keen on conjuring up the image of virile, industrious, courageous, obedient, brave and sacrificial men as the core of the German nationality,<sup>21</sup> which strikingly resembles Fascism's description of Italian virtues. The last similarity in their teaching of the nation's ethno-cultural concepts between the two totalitarian ideologies is that the conviction of cultural and moral superiority of their nations is embedded in the logical foundation of their expansionism. Both Fascism and Nazism affirm that 'laws of nature' –the eternal struggle for survival and natural selection of the fittest– are also valid in the relationship between human societies or nations. So, from Fascist and Nazi points of view, it is natural and almost determined by the Providence that

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<sup>19</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 97–98, 131–51.

<sup>20</sup> According to Gilmer Blackburn's study, Nazi history textbooks categorise nations into three: 'culture-creators', 'culture-bearers' and 'culture-destroyers'. Undoubtedly, 'culture-creators' are the most superior in this categorisation. See Blackburn, *Education in the Third*, pp. 51–52, 180.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95–103.

a morally, culturally and demographically superior nation conquers 'necessary' territories for its survival and well-being, even if those territories have been occupied by other inferior nations or races for a long time.<sup>22</sup> This logic of the conquest of a living space, as Davide Rodogno points out, is a crucial part of Fascism's and Nazism's project to build a totalitarian state,<sup>23</sup> and consequently, I argue, makes its imprint on their education; Nazi textbooks positively describe historical cases in which 'superior' races (the Nordics, the Germanic tribes and the Vikings) invaded and conquered other lands.<sup>24</sup> The Fascist history text justifies Italy's conquest of Ethiopia on the basis of the Abyssinians' barbarity and "lack of civilisation", and in the name of the nation's demographic needs:

"The Abyssinians, who almost demonstrate better their lack of culture, did not hesitate to threaten and attack our subjects [...] to steal animals and to drag women and children into slavery. [...] the assault on the Italian consulate at Gondar and the attack on our positions at Walwal had shown that the security of our colonial borders was threatened by the arrogance of barbarous and tyrannical Abyssinia [...]."<sup>25</sup>

"Italy advanced towards the Ethiopian enterprise to remedy the injustices of peace and for reasons of advancement and demographic expansion."<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, there are also disparities in schoolbooks between the two totalitarian ideologies. Most of all, Nazi textbooks are undoubtedly ethnocentric and biologically racist. This does not only mean that Nazi authors of the textbooks define Germanness principally in biological terms. It is also noteworthy that in their historical narrative, racial 'purity', in the biological, cultural and spiritual sense, is explained as a decisive factor in determining the nation's fate and destiny.

<sup>22</sup> Blackburn, *Education in the Third*, pp.64-74; Ezio Maria Gray, *Il Fascismo e l'Europa* (Rome: Partito Nazionale Fascista, 1943), p. 21; Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>23</sup> Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire*, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> Blackburn, *Education in the Third*, pp. 50, 52 and 55.

<sup>25</sup> "Abissini, i quali, quasi per meglio dimostrare la loro scarsa civiltà, non si facevano scrupolo di minacciare e di aggredire sudditi nostri [...] per rubare animali e per trascinare in schiavitù donne e bambini. [...] l'assalto al consolato italiano di Gondar e l'aggressione alle nostre posizioni di Ual-Ual ebbero dimostrato che la sicurezza delle nostre frontiere coloniali era minacciata dalla prepotenza della barbara e schiavista Abissinia [...]."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 199-200.

<sup>26</sup> "L'Italia mosse all'impresa etiopica per correggere le ingiustizie della pace e per ragioni di civiltà e di espansione demografica"; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 184.

Amongst all 'Aryan' sub-races, the Germans, according to the Nazi textbooks, are the most superior and deserve to be the master nation because they best preserve the Aryan's racial 'purity' in their blood, language, thoughts and culture.<sup>27</sup> Anti-Semitism with the scorn for other nations (races) is also evident in the Nazi history texts. Schoolchildren in Nazi Germany were taught that the Jews were an evil race and the ultimate enemy of the German nation. The history textbooks exploited, or often falsified, many seemingly plausible historical examples to demonstrate it.<sup>28</sup> Undisguised contempt for other nations too is an obviously distinctive feature in Nazi historical discourse. In Nazi history textbooks, therefore, there are many accounts which despise not only the Jews but also non-German races or nations, like the 'Negro', the English, the French and the Slav.<sup>29</sup>

Yet, the Fascist history textbook lacks these elements. It is neither ethnocentric nor biologically racist; the Fascist schoolbook authors conceive the Italian nation mostly in cultural, linguistic, and spiritual terms rather than biological terms. Explanations on the ethnic origins of the Italians are minimal and any description of the nation's physical stereotypes, which is a typical theme in the Nazi and even in some Victorian British schoolbooks, is not found in Fascist history texts. In fact, it seems that the Fascist textbook is eager to avoid or gloss over mentioning the racially hybrid roots of Italians. Equally, the biological determinism in history and the discourse of racial 'purity' are not evident in Fascist textbooks. The word '*razza*' (race) itself is hardly used in Fascist history textbooks. Even in the 1940s' edition, such a word is rarely used.<sup>30</sup> More surprisingly, Fascist schoolbooks ignore the Jewish question and hardly propagate Anti-Semitism. Also, the only paragraph on the ancient Israeli in the 1930s' version is simply removed in the later edition.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, negative judgments on other nations are occasionally expressed in the book but mostly when a foreign ruler or country was believed to be the oppressor or opponent of the Italian nation.<sup>32</sup> In short, although othering is a discursive

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<sup>27</sup> Blackburn, *Education in the Third*, pp. 47-57, 64-74.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139-49.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-69.

<sup>30</sup> For example, the word *razza* or *stirpe*, whatever the context, is used just once in the 1930's edition of the fourth grader's text and three times in the fifth grader in all editions. The figure increases to only 9 in the 1940s' *IV classe* which is still rare appearance.

<sup>31</sup> For the only textbook's account on the Jewish history, see *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 74-76.

<sup>32</sup> The sole exception to this is a negative description on the Abyssinians, mentioned above in the footnote no. 25; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 200.



manoeuvre adopted in the Fascist historical narrative and the nation's superiority is strongly emphasised by Fascist education, Fascist schoolbooks never demonise or completely disparage other races as the Nazi counterparts do. Therefore, if the aim of territorial expansion in Fascism was not to annihilate other nations,<sup>33</sup> the absence of extreme xenophobia in Fascist textbooks could be evidence of it.

Of course, there are plenty of chauvinistic elements in Fascist historical discourses including the school textbook and it is true that radical forms of Fascism are racist in both politics and culture.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless what I argue here is that extreme components of fascist (Nazism's and Fascism's) racism, in the sense of racial determinism and xenophobia, are not reflected in the Fascist history textbooks for children. This is the most significant difference between the Fascist textbook and the Nazi one, and is ironically one of the reasons why after the fall of the totalitarian regimes, some vestiges –languages, themes, narrative strategies, and even authors– of Fascist history education were able to survive in Italy while almost all of the Nazi's were removed in East and West Germany.<sup>35</sup>

So far, this study has illustrated the components of ethno-cultural nationalism, i.e., the emphasis on national language and culture, the discourse of national characters, and Italo-centricity of the narration, in Fascist schoolbooks. Although the aspect of ethno-cultural nationalism appears predominant in the discourse of *Libro unico di Stato*, it does not mean that the other side of nationalism –civic nationalism– is negligible. The following section will examine civic nationalist elements within the Fascist history text.

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<sup>33</sup> Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire* p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> On racism and Anti-Semitism as a radical element of Fascist culture, see Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, pp. 155–57.

<sup>35</sup> In Italy, some Fascist school textbooks were still in use, just with the elimination of all positive statements on Fascism, under Badoglio's provisional government in the south and in the early years of the Republic. On the other hand, all Nazi schoolbooks were immediately scrapped under the Allies' occupation in Germany (East and West). On the effort for de-Fascistisation of the textbook and its limits in Italy after 1943, refer to Montino, *Le parole educate*, pp. 179–227 and P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 107–33. For the German case, see Robert Birley, 'British Policy in Retrospect', in *The British in Germany: Educational Reconstruction after 1945*, ed. by Arthur Hearnden (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), pp. 46–63; Kathleen Southwell Davis, 'The Problem of Textbooks', in *The British in Germany*, pp. 108–30; Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945–1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 22, 25, 29–32. All these three works, albeit briefly, mention the East German.

### Civic nationalist perceptions of the nation and nationhood

#### 1. Civic nationalist values: liberty, law and order, love of *Patria*, independence

The most visible evidence of civic nationalism in Fascist history school textbooks is the frequent reference to values such as liberty, law and order, love of *Patria* (or community), autonomy, unity and the nation's will of independence. However, the textbook's appropriation of these civic nationalist virtues depends on the historical period under discussion. Regardless of historical periods, the Fascist schoolbook largely underscores the importance of loving *Patria*. Yet it focuses more on liberty, unity, autonomy, and the will of independence from the Middle Ages to the dawn of the Risorgimento. Meanwhile, in the Risorgimento history, all civic values mentioned above are stressed along with love of *Patria*. As for post-Unification Italy, schoolchildren are unsurprisingly taught more about law, order, and unity, along with a love of the fatherland, than liberty and independence.

As proof of love of *Patria*, the textbook's narrative gives numerous examples of patriotic deeds by individuals or groups. From the early days of Rome to the recent years of Fascist Italy, the history text is full of heroic sacrifices and bravery for the patriotic cause by historical or legendary figures: Gaius Mucius Scaevola, Gaius Coriolanus's mother, Marcus Atilius Regulus in Roman history, Pier Capponi, Francesco Ferrucci, Pietro Micca, and Balilla in the early modern and pre-Risorgimento periods, and countless patriots during the Risorgimento, Irredentists, heroes in the Great War, and finally Fascist martyrs.<sup>36</sup> Even in the medieval era, in which apparently patriotic episodes were rarely found, the textbook authors manage to preach patriotism. The Lombard League in 1176 is depicted as a heroic and united struggle of "Italians" (not Lombards) against foreigners.<sup>37</sup> By the same token, an edition of the fifth grader emphasises Dante Alighieri's love of *Patria* rather than his literary achievements saying that he longed for

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<sup>36</sup> There are too many accounts of patriotic episodes in the complete editions and grades of the textbook to list. Instead, I only refer to some of examples in the 1930s editions. The 1940s versions, however, recount as many patriotic stories as the previous editions do; *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 215-17, 240-41, 250-51, 289-90, 312-15; *Libro IV classe* (1932/7), pp. 104-5, 113-14; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 127, 129-30, 137-38, 148-51, 153, 165-66.

<sup>37</sup> "E quando l'Imperatore scese ancora per dettare legge, in una grande battaglia, a Legnano **gli Italiani** rifulsero di gloria come nei tempi di Roma", "[...] la battaglia si combatte con furore: da un lato si lotta per la libertà, per i figli, per gli averi; dall'altro lato, **per sola prepotenza ingiusta.**"; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 213-15 (quotations in p. 213 and p. 215. highlights made by me).

the unity of people “in the beautiful country which the Apennines divide, and the sea and the Alps surround.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it is not merely patriotic examples which are highlighted. The textbook also states that Italy’s historical fate –its success, glory and misfortune– depends on people’s unity or love of their country. Rome, insists the schoolbook, for example, “was great and glorious” as long as “the love of the Fatherland burned in the chests of citizens” and collapsed when this love “died”.<sup>39</sup>

The problem in the discourse of loving the *Patria* is that its meaning is ambiguous. What is the *Patria*? Is the Roman concept of *Patria* identical with the one of medieval communes? How can we conceptualise patriotism? Does it mean the loyalty and love to the nation or the state, or both? The Fascist schoolbook does not give a clear definition. Its concept of *Patria* is varied depending on the context and historical period. In Roman times, when perception of the nation did not exist, the state (at first a tiny city-state and later the empire) is implied as the object of Roman people’s loyalty in the textbook account.<sup>40</sup> As the narrative goes on into medieval and pre-modern history, the connotation of *Patria* is altered. When the narrative reaches the Battle of Legnano (1176), it tacitly indicates that the object of the Lombard League’s loyalty was the Italian nation, by presenting this event as the national struggle against a tyrant foreign ruler.<sup>41</sup> In the Francesco Ferrucci episode, on the other hand, Ferrucci is depicted as a courageous citizen-soldier whose loyalty belonged to the republican Florentine state.<sup>42</sup> Such inconsistent connotations of *Patria* or the object of patriotism, however, suddenly converge on the unified nation-state, i.e., the Kingdom of Italy, in the narrative of the Risorgimento and post-Risorgimento. It is uniformly stated that all patriots and war heroes desired and loved the (unified) nation-state of Italy, and their commitment and sacrifices were made for Italy.<sup>43</sup> Finally,

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<sup>38</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 218-19 (quotation in p. 218; this phrase is actually Petrarch’s verse, not Dante’s. So, the *Libro unico* made another factual error here).

<sup>39</sup> “Roma fu grande e gloriosa, ed uscì trionfante da ogni impresa e da ogni pericolo, finchè l’amor di patria infiammò il petto dei cittadini [...]. Spentosi l’amor patrio [...] l’Impero romano d’Occidentale crollò,”; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 91.

<sup>40</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932/7); *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 131-91.

<sup>41</sup> “La vittoriosa lotta sostenuta dai Comuni italiani contro il sovrano tedesco fu memoranda, anche perchè vibrò in essa evidente il sentimento dell’avversione nazionale contro gli stranieri.”; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 111-13 or *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 214-15; quotation in *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 113.

<sup>42</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 129; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 131-32.

<sup>43</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932/7); *Libro III classe* (1941); *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 148-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 146-204.

in the account of Fascist Italy, the meaning of *Patria* is expanded by implicitly identifying Mussolini's movement with love of the nation, state and monarchy:

"New evidence of love for the Nation was his august approval of the Fascist national movement when He [Vittorio Emanuele III] wanted to appoint Benito Mussolini to the Government of Italy."<sup>44</sup>

The focus of discourses on civic nationalist values in the textbook account shifts to liberty and independence after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. When explaining the emergence and development of autonomous medieval communes in Italy, the text summarises that Italian communes were "proud of the liberty" in their political, administrative, economic, judicial and military affairs, which was "acquired through numerous struggles" against feudalism, and they persistently "defended it from any threat".<sup>45</sup> In order to advocate the Italians' longstanding spirit of liberty and independence, the Fascist schoolbook also gives examples of historical events such as the Battle of Legnano and the Sicilian Vespers (1282).<sup>46</sup> The authors of the textbook might recognise inconsistency or obscurity in the connotation of *Patria* in the medieval history section. So they chose liberty and independence (autonomy) to redress this problem. By describing medieval history as the long process in which the Italians pursued political freedom and independence, the authors were able to demonstrate the persistence of *Italianità*. Thereby conveniently linking medieval history with the narrative of the Risorgimento, despite the absence of a unified nation-state and the questionable existence of national identity in the Middle Ages.

Yet all the historical events and figures that are used as examples of the Italian spirit of patriotism, freedom and independence in the text are not genuinely exclusive topics of the Fascist historiography. They all had been frequently commemorated, recreated and dramatised themes in the Italian liberal nationalist culture since the age of the Risorgimento. Goffredo Mameli's reference to Legnano, the Sicilian Vespers and Ferrucci in his lyric of *Fratelli d'Italia* (1847), Francesco Hayez's painting (1846) and Verdi's opera (1855) of the Sicilian Vespers, and

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<sup>44</sup> "Nuova testimonianza di amore verso la Nazione fu l'augusto suo assenso al movimento nazionale del Fascismo quando Egli [Vittorio Emanuele III] volle l'assunzione di Benito Mussolini al Governo dell'Italia."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 195-205 (quotation in p. 205).

<sup>45</sup> "I Comuni furono giustamente fieri della libertà conquistata attraverso tante lotte e la difesero con coraggiosa tenacia ogni minaccia anche contro l'Impero."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 110-11.

<sup>46</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 214-15; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 111-13, 116-17.

Massimo D'Azeglio's novel, *Ettore Fieramosca* (1833) are just some examples.<sup>47</sup> This further underlines the fact that the Fascist historiography and history education borrowed a lot from liberal nationalism in its discursive manner, topics, and messages.

The Risorgimento in the textbook narrative becomes the synthesis and culmination of all the previously presented values of civic nationalism. *Patria* is clearly presupposed as the unified nation-state of Italy, and liberty and independence become the prime 'national' agenda in the narrative. The text states that all patriots, war heroes and Irredentists wanted, loved, acted, and fought for Italy, the sole independent state of all Italians under common sovereignty. Many anecdotes of the struggles for unification and independence in the textbook's Risorgimento history also convey the same message; when all Italians were united and disciplined, as the Five Days of Milan (1848) testified, they won; when they were divided or factionalised, as the Battle of Custoza (1849) showed, they failed or were defeated.<sup>48</sup>

All of a sudden, law and order, unity, and love of *Patria* dominate the pages on the post-Risorgimento narrative and other civic nationalist values, such as freedom and independence, are marginalised. One might think that this was caused by the formation of Italy as an independent nation-state and a different national agenda after the Unification. Yet the regime had other motivations for this change. Law has two functions; the execution of justice and maintaining order. Traditionally, in the discourse of nationalism, law has symbolised two values: fairness and discipline (hierarchy, obedience). In the post-Unification part of the Fascist schoolbook, the discourse of law exclusively designates the latter –discipline. By interpreting law as discipline or hierarchy in the context of Italian history, the Fascist regime aims not only to legitimise its

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<sup>47</sup> Fieramosca is an Italian *condottiero* and one of the protagonists of the Challenge of Barletta (1503) which is the event described in all editions of the fifth grader. For more about Hayez's, Verdi's and D'Azeglio's works on the mentioned themes, see Adrian Lyttelton, 'Creating a National Past: History, Myth and Image in the Risorgimento' in *Making and Remaking*, pp. 27–74.

<sup>48</sup> For the textbook's account on the Five Days of Milan, see *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 226–29; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 73; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 156–57 and *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 153; "Nobili e popolani, sacerdoti e borghesi, uomini maturi e giovinetti corsero a vendicarli, uniti come fratelli dall'odio contro l'austriaco"; quotation in *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 227. On the Battle of Custoza in the text, see *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 235–36; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 74; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 160 or *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 155; "Ma intanto gli altri principi avevano bene compreso che se l'Austria fosse stata vinta, essi avrebbero perduto i propri stati. Infatti tutta l'Italia avrebbe voluto riunirsi sotto Casa Savoia [...]. Perciò questi principi si erano affrettati a ritirarsi dalla guerra, dando ordine alle loro truppe di ritornare. [...] Carlo Alberto era, così, abbandonato dagli altri principi."; quotation in *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 235.

seizure of power as a restorer of order but also to connect Fascist values with the spiritual and moral lineage of the Italian nationhood. Likewise the emphasis on unity and patriotism in the narrative has a double aim: to promote loyalty to the regime and to associate Fascism with *Italianità*.

Here, we should consider with more care why the emphasis on liberty and independence is dramatically diminished. We might find the answer in the ambivalent and arbitrary use of liberty and independence in the Fascist historical-political discourses. According to Fascist philosophy, liberty signifies not freedom of individuals, but freedom of the collective.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, the Fascist schoolbook's historical discourse tends to underline liberty and independence during times when the nation suffered from subordination to foreign rules or brutal invasions of foreign forces, but it does not discuss individual freedom and autonomy at all. This after all stems from Fascism's anti-liberalism and is an example of the substantial difference between the Fascist and liberal historical discourse. Fascism's notion of independence is equally arbitrary and deceptive regarding its discourse of imperialism. The Fascist regime often criticised British or French imperialism and was willing to support independent movements within the subjugated nations of the British and French empires.<sup>50</sup> Yet Mussolini's government conquered or annexed other nation's territories in Ethiopia, the Mediterranean islands and Albania, and justified these acts in terms of 'civilising mission' or liberation of oppressed indigenous peoples from the 'plutocratic' capitalist empires.<sup>51</sup> This self-contradictory logic of independence or autonomy of the nation is embedded in the Fascist school textbook. While the textbook recounts Fascist Italy's need and rights to acquire overseas colonies, it accuses Britain and France of being evil hegemonic powers who intend to obstruct Italy's colonial enterprises to preserve their imperial interests:

"The League of Nations, created by the English and the French to ensure their hegemony in Europe, approved the shameful sanctions against our Fatherland."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ercole, 'I valori storici', pp. 195-56; G. Gentile, *Origins and Doctrines*, pp. 25-28.

<sup>50</sup> Renzo De Felice, *Il Fascismo e l'Oriente: arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988)

<sup>51</sup> Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>52</sup> "La Società delle Nazioni, creata dagli Inglesi e dai Francesi per assicurare la loro egemonia in Europa, decretò ai danni della Patria nostra le vergognose sanzioni."; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 185-86.

"The ever deceitful Abyssinia and the support that it found from some European powers, which deluded themselves that they could halt Fascist Italy's progress, destroyed any possibility of an agreement between Italy and Ethiopia. The renewed provocations [...], favoured by some countries which were too jealous of Italy's ever-growing power, [...] forced the Italian government to adopt decisive measures."<sup>53</sup>

Arguably, the Fascist discourse of civic nationalist values in the history textbook is far from original and never irresistibly persuasive. As stated above, its definition of *Patria* is vague and its examples of liberty and patriotism are closer to a continuation of the liberal practice than an innovative set of ideas. Also the sermon of nations' independence is arbitrary and paradoxical. In addition, there is another limitation to the Fascist history textbook's civic nationalist discourse: the civic nationalist values cited in the Fascist text only constitute part of the discourse on Italian national character or *Italianità*. In the definition of civic nationalism, the nation is, in principle, a community of free and voluntary citizens who are willing to share a common administrative, judicial, and political entity and to unite in order to defend their common well-being.<sup>54</sup> The civic nationalist discourse, as a result, ought to encompass the premise that the state apparatus or civic political institutions and the will of free individuals are essential bonds to guarantee principles like liberty, autonomy, and democracy and to lay the foundation of the national community. However, in the Fascist *Libro unico di Stato*, all civic virtues -love of the *Patria*, liberty, independence, unity- are conceived only as innate inclinations of Italians, and not as philosophical creeds to form the nation.

## 2. Civic institutions: the monarchy, the state, the Church and the Fascist regime

The evolution or development of civic institutions is another important backbone in civic nationalist historiographies. Various political, social, and cultural institutions or structures of the state like constitutional monarchies, parliamentary democracy, the Church, law and so on, are identified with the nation by civic nationalists so that their (trans)formation is parallel to the

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<sup>53</sup> "L'eterna malafede abissina e l'appoggio che questa trovò presso alcune potenze europee, che si illusero di potere fermare il cammino dell'Italia fascista, fecero fallire ogni possibilità d'intesa fra l'Italia e l'Etiopia. Le rinnovate provocazioni [...], favoriti da qualche paese troppo geloso della sempre crescente potenza dell'Italia, [...] obbligarono il Governo italiano ad adottare misure decisive."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 199-204 (quotation in pp. 200-01).

<sup>54</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, pp. 14-16.

trajectory of the nation-state building as in liberal historiographies of Victorian Britain, the Second French Republic, the First Spanish Republic, Restoration Spain, and Liberal Italy.<sup>55</sup> In the Fascist schoolbook, the main themes we can uncover from these civic institutions are the Church, the Savoyard monarchy, the state, and the Fascist government.

Again, the emphasis on a particular theme depends on the historical period. While more attention is paid to the Savoy monarchs in the early modern epochs and the Risorgimento, Mussolini's Fascism is the leading theme in the account of World War I's Interventionism and the post-war era. The narrative of *Libro unico* tries to present the Savoyard princes as energetic patrons or precursors of Italian unification from as early as the fourteenth century, and to integrate them into the Risorgimento history. Nevertheless, the outcome seems neither highly plausible nor convincing. No tangible evidence is given to explain the 'inseparable' connection between the Savoyard principality's expansion or development and the formation of unified Italy before the eighteenth century.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the evolution of Fascism is slightly better explained in all editions. It is briefly but rather clearly explained that Fascism started as a 'patriotic' movement, won the mass support, seized power, and proved its 'capability' as the governing regime along with its spiritual 'inherence' of *Italianità*.<sup>57</sup> In this sense, listing achievements of the Fascist regime is necessary to demonstrate the movement's development. One might think that the textbook authors often talked about the monarchy and Fascism in a bid to equate them with the nation-state. Yet, there is another reason behind the textbook's incorporation of the Savoy and Fascism into the national history. It is not only an attempt to legitimise the regime or Fascism's co-existence with the king but also, from the Fascist point of view, a logically necessary discourse to illustrate institutional development of the monarchy and the Fascist movement to argue their inevitable emergence in the national history.

The evolutionary process of nation-state building is also described in the textbook, especially in the parts on the pre-modern eras. From the Middle Ages to the fifteenth century, the textbook account describes the process in which autonomous medieval communes derived from feudal

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<sup>55</sup> Boyd, *Historia Patria*, pp. 82, 130.

<sup>56</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 226; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 118, 121, 130-31; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 132-34.

<sup>57</sup> Although the 1940s' edition also contains a large section on Fascism and its regime, the late 1930s' text gives a better account of the subject in terms of the Fascist movement's organic integration into the national history. *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 167-80; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 114-27; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 195-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 181-204.



domains in Italy and how these innumerable micro-states developed into the *Signoria* and eventually became bigger, more centralised principalities annexing neighbours or fusing with each other.<sup>58</sup> As such, assessing the political status of Italy at the end of the fifteenth century, the text states:

"Italy had therefore progressed considerably as compared with the fragmentation of the feudal era and the division of the communal age. [...] Moreover, lords and princes had created well-organised governments, with stable central power under their personal control, which constituted another big step towards the modern state."<sup>59</sup>

What we should note is that this statement not merely provides a discussion on the development of Italian political institutions, but also partially reflects Volpe's thesis of 'history as a continuum of progress'. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Volpe firmly argued that history was the record of humanity's continual march towards progress, and medieval history was the sphere where he mostly attempted to validate this thesis. Hence, we can ascertain that the Fascist school textbook's historiography embraces some ideas of the 'historical continuity' thesis and exhibits them in its discourse on civic institutions.

Perhaps the Catholic Church is the only socio-cultural civic institution – albeit historically it is a political institution as well – discussed in the textbook. Unlike the Savoy, the state, and the Fascist regime, the Church had been a consistent feature of Italian history since its birth in the late years of ancient history. So the Church is a convenient institution to claim as an exponent of the longstanding Italian nationality because it is one of the oldest institutions in the Western world and is deeply involved in the nation's history, politics, culture, and customs. The *Libro unico di Stato* treats Catholicism in absolutely positive terms. This was certainly part of the regime's effort to appease the Vatican but it might be misleading to regard such a positive reception of Catholicism as nothing more than a flattering gesture. The textbook continually attempts to build an image of a fundamental and inseparable relationship between the Church and

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<sup>58</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 108–11, 117–18, 121–22.

<sup>59</sup> "L'Italia aveva dunque notevolmente progredito in confronto allo spezzettamento dell'età feudale ed al frazionamento della età comunale. [...] Inoltre signori e principi avevano creato buoni ordini di governo, con un saldo potere centrale sotto il loro personale controllo, il che costituiva un altro grande progresso verso lo stato moderno."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 122.

Italy by identifying early Christian virtues with good Roman traditions. It does this by stressing the Church's role as a sole defender of the Roman civilisation in medieval times, and by describing papal Rome as "an empire without arms" or "the Second Roman Empire".<sup>60</sup> Such narrative constructions, furthermore, continue in early modern and modern history as well. For instance, Pope Pius IX's 'spiritual' leadership during the Risorgimento, with contributions from the Catholic Church and the neo-Guelphs, is highlighted in most editions of the text.<sup>61</sup> The authors' intention is clear; to demonstrate that the Church has evolved within the historical trajectory of the nation and is thus an essential part of *Italianità*. This also explains why the Investiture Controversy and the Humiliation of Canossa (1077) are told at such length in the book.<sup>62</sup> The textbook not only hails the Church's acquisition of superiority over secular power but also explicates its historical meaning in the context of the national formation with the closing comment that:

"The Papacy had undeniably achieved a great moral victory. In addition, the Investiture Controversy, [...] appeared to Italians as a revival of Rome's ancient power against the coarse foreign barbarians [and a] comforting sign that national sentiment was still alive."<sup>63</sup>

However, we should at this point remember that the Fascist schoolbook deliberately evades or minimises negative aspects of the Church in history. It is well known that anti-clericalism was one of the major ideological components of Fascism from its early days. Also historically, the Catholic Church was not always a proponent of the national state or the independent movement. As various examples in Italian history testify, the Papal States, with its anachronistic governance and intransigent anti-secularism, were often a main hindrance to Unification, and the Vatican

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<sup>60</sup> As for the identification of early Christianity and Roman tradition, see *Libro IV classe* (1932), p. 145. For emphasis on the Church's role in the Middle Ages, refer to *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-96. The comments of "un impero senz'armi" or "il secondo Impero di Roma" are found in *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 195-96 (quotations on the same pages).

<sup>61</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 221-22; *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 71-72; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 71-72; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 154-56.

<sup>62</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 105-7.

<sup>63</sup> "Il Papato aveva innegabilmente conseguito una grande vittoria morale. Inoltre la lotta per le investiture, [...] apparve agli Italiani come una riscossa dell'antica potenza di Roma contro la rude barbarie straniera, segno confortante che il sentimento nazionale era pur vivo."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 107.

remained a stubborn opponent of the nation-state throughout the years of Liberal Italy.<sup>64</sup> The Church or Catholicism, in other words, was not only a part of the nation's history, identity, culture and civic institutions, but also an enemy of the nation-state, i.e., a kind of anti-institution. At the expense of its anti-clericalism, however, the Fascist regime deliberately removed accusations against the Church from the textbook. In the end, its aim was to appease the Vatican, and at the same time to claim the unceasing existence of the Italian nationality in a spiritual, cultural and institutional sense.

### 3. The Role of human agency

The last, but not least, element of the civic nationalist discourse in the Fascist history textbook is the role of the human will in the formation of the nation. This, as explained in the previous chapter, is the idea elaborated by Giovanni Gentile, the so-called philosopher of Fascism. However, this idea is not originally Gentile's. Many liberal intellectuals, like the French historian Ernest Renan and German historian Friedrich Meinecke, who were influenced by idealism, devised a similar idea before him.<sup>65</sup> The difference is that (nationalist) liberals believe that a nation is founded upon the free will of individuals, whereas the Fascists do not presuppose such an idea.<sup>66</sup> For Fascism, free will means 'collective' volition, not 'individual'. We can detect a vestige of this thought in the historical narrative of the *Libro unico* although there is no clear statement in the text to say that a nation must be formed by human agency (either 'collective' or 'individual').

From the eighteenth century section onwards, the history textbook increasingly cites terms such as 'people', 'Italians', and 'the mass', which barely appear in the parts on the pre-modern ages.<sup>67</sup> This signifies that the authors intended to stress traits of the popular movement in the

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<sup>64</sup> On the Catholic Church's negative roles in the Risorgimento or opposition to Italian unification, see Frank J Coppa, *The Modern Papacy since 1789* (New York: Longman, 1998), pp. 50-116. For the antagonistic relationship between the Vatican and Liberal Italy, refer to Pollard, *The Vatican and*, pp. 16-19 or Martin Papenheim, 'Roma o morte: culture wars in Italy', in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 202-26.

<sup>65</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, p. 14; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 15-6.

<sup>66</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, pp. 14, 37-40.

<sup>67</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932); *Libro III classe* (1941); *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 146-204.

Risorgimento in order to portray the Unification, i.e., the creation of Italian nation-state, as a result of collective will and action. Maybe this attempt failed as stories of heroes or great men still occupy the absolute majority of the Risorgimento history in the text. Nonetheless, the authors' intention is implicit within the text. There are certain phrases that imply the general will of the people as an incarnation of the nationhood as important, from Fascism's point of view, historical moments: the textbook says that the whole of Italy harmoniously supported its army in World War I with the "unanimous will for revival [of *Italianità*]"; Mussolini's declaration of the war against Ethiopia in 1935 too is told as an expression of the nation's "unbreakable will" to recapture its historical right of hegemony to the world.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, there is no comment in the book to hint that the nation consists of free individual Italians and to guarantee the freedom of citizens as a precondition of a nation-state. Any historical examples showing an improvement of liberty, democracy and human rights in modern Italy is entirely neglected in the text; the abolition of capital punishment in 1889, the extension of male suffrage, the gradual improvement of general working conditions, amendments of labour law etc.<sup>69</sup>

Though the Fascist history manual possesses some features of the civic nationalist discourse as has been explained above, the pedagogical tendency of *Libro unico di Stato* is in substance far from progressive or democratic liberalism. The nation's institutional development, in cultural and economic aspects, is a widely used theme in progressive liberal historiographies.<sup>70</sup> The Fascist text too, as we have seen, discusses the evolution of some civic institutions, but it primarily focuses on political institutions, like the monarchy, the regime, and the state. On the whole, the Fascist manual's discourse on civic institutions looks seriously deficient in paying attention to economic and cultural aspects of the nation's history. In other words, it not only pays little attention to economic and cultural institutions (guilds, trading enterprises, banking networks, education, law, academic societies etc.) but it also, even on these few occasions, fails to

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<sup>68</sup> "Ed accanto ai suoi prodi difensori fu concorde l'Italia intera nella volontà unanime di riscossa, in una magnifica unione di spiriti e di energie (p. 190).", "Il 2 ottobre 1935 il Duce con un discorso [...] proclamò al mondo la volontà incrollabile dell'Italia di ottenere in ogni modo quella giustizia che [...] i trenta secoli della sua storia le davano diritto (p. 202)."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 190, 202.

<sup>69</sup> All grades and editions of the Fascist schoolbook that cover the Kingdom of Italy do not mention these topics at all. See *Libro III classe* (1932/7); *Libro III classe* (1941); *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 146-204.

<sup>70</sup> Boyd, *Historia Patria*, pp. 82-4, 130.

demonstrate the inter-relationship between economic or cultural developments and the eventual formation of the nation-state.

Furthermore, Fascism's use of civic nationalist discursive themes is fundamentally different from the progressive liberal in its ultimate purpose. Progressive liberal civic nationalist discourses were based upon the belief that history education should be a tool to inspire democratic values and a sense of citizenship in the student's mind.<sup>71</sup> Fascist educators did not care about this because their ultimate aim is to breed 'perfect' Fascists, not democratic citizens. This is why the conventional focus of history (i.e., politics and military-oriented historiography), which progressive liberals harshly criticised, was useful for Fascism and was employed as the main narrative framework in the Fascist manual. Therefore, the Fascist textbook only partially incorporated civic nationalism into its historiography regarding its compatibility with distinctive Fascist elements. The next section will highlight this fact further by investigating and pinpointing Fascism's peculiar traits in the history textbook.

### **Fascist imprints in the discussion of nationality**

We can extract three elements of Fascist imprints from the nation's historical narrative in *Libro unico di Stato*: the centrality of politics and military affairs, heroism, and the collectivist social Darwinist view of the world (a theory of the survival of the fittest and the endless struggle between nations). The treatment of these three themes in the textbook narrative is closely intertwined with each other.

The political and military-oriented historiography in the Fascist schoolbook is unmistakable. The history section in *Libro unico* is utterly centred on political and military topics. Stories of political conflicts, great statesmen and warriors, military conquests of a new territory, civil wars, foreign invasions, famous battles and armed uprisings or resistances are the absolutely dominant themes in the textbook account from the birth of Rome to the present-day, Fascist Italy. Heroism is also evident. The Fascist history text is full of great men's stories; artistic or scientific genius, extraordinary adventurers, visionary political leaders, zealous patriots, and courageous war heroes.

Methodologically, of course, this is not a unique feature of the Fascist historiography. Rather, it was a very conventional way of telling history which existed long before the establishment of history as an academic discipline, and was overwhelmingly pre-dominant in liberal nationalist

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-39.

history writings including school textbooks. Tales of the exceptional deeds of heroic men and brutal but thrilling fierce battles are an effective medium to fascinate children,<sup>72</sup> and are therefore irresistible themes for Fascist textbook writers. However, it would be erroneous to believe that the exaltation of heroes and heavy doses of political military history in the Fascist textbook was merely designed to be an intensified version of the conventional history. There are other reasons why the Fascist authors chose them. The answer, as the next section will analyse, lies in the premise of the Fascist worldview and Fascism's ideal image of heroes.

#### 1. Fascism's world view and militarism

Based upon the belief that the survival of the fittest principle in the natural world is also valid in the relationship between human societies, the Fascists, who thought that the nation was the most perfect and spontaneous form of human society, were obsessed with securing their nation's superiority and domination of the international arena.<sup>73</sup> To win supremacy required strength and power in order to enforce Italy's will on other nations, if necessary. Colonial territories and military prowess, thus, were both the sign and instrument of a strong nation and it was crucial for the regime to cultivate militant Italians for these aims. This was the underlying but more fundamental motive of the militarism in Fascist schoolbook's historiography. In short, liberals used military (or military-oriented) history to glorify the nation's past, whereas the Fascists did so in order to instil militarism and to transform Italians into a bellicose nation.

The seemingly clumsy addition of pages on the Italian armed forces in the 1940s' textbook can be understood in this sense as well. This section at the end of the fifth grader text is not a historical account because it only provides basic information on the structure and the role of the *Carabinieri*, MVSN (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*), the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.<sup>74</sup> This is a typical paragraph in these pages:

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>73</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>74</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 205-11.

"*Infantry*. [This] is the queen of battles. Infantrymen combat mostly on foot and confront the enemy in physical combat and therefore must have strong muscles and a fighting spirit. [...] [These qualities] are found in the Infantry: the Grenadiers, the *Bersaglieri*, and Alpinetroops."<sup>75</sup>

Such an awkward insertion, completely out of context from the history lesson, however, is not only for propaganda purposes; it is also designed to incorporate military values into every aspect of the nation's life so as to implant militant habits. Yet it appears rather counter-productive as it reduces the text's aesthetic and pedagogical quality.

## 2. Heroism, the cult of the Duce and of death

Supremacy, yet, cannot be acquired by only military power. Even a spiritually and militarily superior nation, in the Fascist interpretation of history, can be defeated, humiliated or subjugated if it lacks political ability or, more precisely, an appropriate political leadership.<sup>76</sup> This is consistent with Fascist logic which states that a superior nation needs a visionary and determined political leader who is able to lead his nation to its correct historical destiny. Fortunately, from Fascism's point of view, history suggests that a superior nation produces many heroes, great men and leaders especially in times of need. The successive emergence of heroes in the Fascist schoolbook account is used to verify this version of history.

More importantly, heroism in the textbook narrative shows the conjuncture between Fascism's history of great men and its cult of the Duce. It is conceivable that history as tales of national heroes would be an ideal instrument to set the drama of Mussolini's heroic deeds and to justify his 'unquestionable' leadership. In other words, Mussolini's meteoric rise with his iron will during a time of difficulty saved the nation as Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi had done before.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore semi-hagiographies of World War I heroes in the text help to make the cult of Mussolini seem like an organic part of the nation's

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<sup>75</sup> "*Fanteria*. È la regina delle battaglie. Il fante combatte soprattutto a piedi, affronta il nemico petto a petto e deve quindi avere muscoli saldi e anima guerriera. [...] Appartengono alla Fanteria: i *Granatieri*, i *Bersaglieri*, e gli *Alpini*."; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 206-7.

<sup>76</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, p. 38; Blackburn, *Education in the Third*, pp. 55-64.

<sup>77</sup> On Mussolini, see *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 166-67; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 114-20. On other figures, look into *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 89-91, 95-96; *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 119-21, 124-34; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 151-53, 164-76; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 162-65, 169-70; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 159-60.

history. Indeed, a 1930s' edition of the third grader text inserts Mussolini's story at the end of the section, titled 'Italian martyrs and heroes in the Great War', which is a series of hagiographic tales on war heroes.<sup>78</sup>

Like militarism, the Fascist use of heroism in historical discourse is different from its liberal equivalent. Liberal nationalists glorify heroes to epitomise ideal national characters. On the other hand, the Fascist cult of heroes is limited to certain virtues. Apart from a few exceptions,<sup>79</sup> all biographies in the Fascist text concentrate on praising some (or sometimes all) of these characteristics: patriotism, robustness, tenacity, courage, obedience, determination, and extraordinary insight, which are supposedly linked to military ability and masculinity or to the Duce. To be sure, liberal historiographies also extol these virtues in their portrayals of great men. Yet they equally hail other character traits of heroes such as honesty, probity, fairness, wisdom, piety, creativity, and freedom of spirit etc. The Fascist textbook's admiration of great men shows little interest in these characteristics. As we can see in the tales of great Italian navigators, even those admired for their historical achievements, the narrative in *Libro unico* often focuses on their bravery, tenacity and visionary insight rather than their deeds.<sup>80</sup> Hence it is evident that the Fascist schoolbook exploits heroism in order to propel the transformation of Italians into a bellicose nation and to consolidate the worship of the Duce by conjuring up reminiscent images of virile heroes and Mussolini.

Along with the cult of the Duce, heroism conflates another peculiar concept of Fascism, that is, the cult of death. As George Mosse and Emilio Gentile argue, the cult of the dead was at the centre of the Fascist use of political rituals as a means to aestheticize politics.<sup>81</sup> It is true that commemoration of fallen soldiers and patriots was a product of liberal and nationalist political culture; numerous monuments, cemeteries, and cenotaphs for the war dead or patriots who gave

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<sup>78</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 166-67. Meanwhile Mussolini's biographic story in the 1940s' text is much longer and bridges the gap between heroic episodes in the Great War and hagiographic accounts of Fascist 'martyrs'. See *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 114-20.

<sup>79</sup> Stories of Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Catherine of Siena in the 1940s' book are the only recognisable exceptions. *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 215-17, 222-24.

<sup>80</sup> The narrative tendency to highlight the navigators' heroic characters over their achievements is visibly strengthened in the 1940s edition. *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 229-32; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-23.

<sup>81</sup> Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, p. 83; E. Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics*, pp. 22-28.



their lives for the nation had already been built, and the funerals of great men became pompous public ceremonies across Europe in the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

However, Fascism did not only venerate the war dead or national heroes to promote patriotism. Firstly, while liberals or nationalists honoured only someone who died for or hugely contributed to the nation's interest, the Fascists equally venerated 'martyrs' of their movement, like the war dead or other national heroes.<sup>83</sup> By connecting its own genesis to Interventionism and heroism in the Great War, Fascism intended to present itself as an heir of the true national spirit as I argued before. The cult of the Fascist dead in their 'mission' to save the nation was a device to aggrandise this connection.<sup>84</sup> This was obviously propaganda designed to legitimise the regime, but it does not mean that this Fascist claim was arbitrary or groundless. Fascism had some plausible credentials to claim its tie with heroism in the Great War; the first generation of Fascists were all veterans or, if they were not conscripted by their age or professions, at least convinced supporters of Interventionism in the First World War.

Secondly, Fascism transformed the worship of the dead into the cult of (heroic) death by interpreting dying on behalf of one's political belief as the transcendence of death, i.e., immortality. In Fascist rituals for the fallen soldiers or martyrs of the movement, it was not unusual to hear that the dead inspired the living with their exemplary heroism, and were kept alive in the soul of the fatherland. Such glorification of death, as Mosse analyses, did not seem astonishing in an ideology which believed in perpetual conflict between nations.<sup>85</sup> To prove how this Fascist concept and cult of death affected the history textbook, it might be enough to quote a phrase from *Libro unico di Stato*:

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<sup>82</sup> Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, pp. 84-5; E. Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics*, pp. 15-18.

<sup>83</sup> One of the good examples is a comment made by Dario Lupi, the undersecretary of the Public Instruction, on 22 February 1923 in the ministry's official circular which reads; "Poiché l'aspra e amara e sanguinosa battaglia combattuta contro il bolscevismo deve sotto l'aspetto storico e nazionale considerarsi come la continuazione della guerra lunga ed eroica conclusa e suggellata epicamente con la vittoria di Vittorio Veneto; e poiché la fede che condusse al sacrificio i martiri del fascismo è la fede stessa che circonfuse di gloria l'olocausto santo dei Caduti in guerra."; quoted in Roberta Suzzi Valli, 'Il culto dei martiri fascisti' in *La morte per la patria: La celebrazione dei caduti dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica*, eds. by Oliver Janz and Lutz Klinkhammer (Rome: Donzelli, 2008), p. 110.

<sup>84</sup> Suzzi Valli, 'Il culto dei', pp. 101-17.

<sup>85</sup> Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, p. 86; E. Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics*, pp. 25-28.

"Fascism venerates and honours its fallen: it considers them to be a sacred symbol of sacrifice and ever-present among the living. Together with the fallen from the «Great War», the fallen Fascists show us [that] the desire for greatness which rouses our entire nation was born from much pain."<sup>86</sup>

If death in war or fighting for a patriotic cause is regarded as being immortal, dying for one's nation no longer becomes something to grieve. So, unlike the liberal counterparts, Fascist commemorations of the patriotic dead –ceremonies, monuments, funerals, obituaries, burial inscriptions– were often characterised by solemnity and grandiosity rather than by the gloomy atmosphere of mourning. Therefore, it is hardly surprising, as one commentator in the *Ventennio* wrote, that:

"The Fascist conception of war [...] makes us glorify, not lament our dead, [it] makes us portray them not as fallen bodies, but upright and proud, with swords held high and laurels in their fists, [...]. We want the symbols which represent them to show them as magnificent with trembling muscles and deep and knowing gaze."<sup>87</sup>

Although the *Libro unico* never conspicuously describes the war dead or Fascist martyrs in such a highly embellished way, it is true that the book, like other Fascist commemorations of the fallen, hardly expresses any sign of grief in its accounts of them and instead focuses on praising their virtue of sacrifice and extraordinary heroism.

## Conclusion

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<sup>86</sup> "Il Fascismo venera ed onora i suoi Caduti: li considera come sacro simbolo di sacrificio e li ritiene ognora presenti fra i vivi. Insieme coi Caduti nella « Grande guerra », i Caduti fascisti ci dimostrano [...] da quanto dolore sia nata la volontà di grandezza, che anima tutta la nostra Nazione."; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 119.

<sup>87</sup> "La concezione fascista della guerra [...] ci fa glorificare, non rimpiangere i nostri caduti, ce li fa raffigurare ritti, fieri, con la spada alta, con l'alloro nel pugno, e non cadaveri cadenti, [...]. Noi vogliamo che i simboli che li rappresentano li mostrino superbi, coi muscoli vibranti, con lo sguardo alto e consapevole."; Leone Andrea Maggiorotti, 'L'espressione del dolore nella pittura bellica', *Esercito e nazione*, 2, no. 1 (1927), 39.

Nationalism, as Peter Alter points out, is neither on the right nor on the left of the political spectrum. Ironically, it is also possible to say that nationalism is both right-wing and left-wing. Initially, nationalism began as a progressive left-wing movement; since the early nineteenth century, nationalism as a political movement to pursue the individual nation's self-determination had inspired peoples which were subordinated to foreign rule, and became a revolutionary but democratic idea to threaten the Restoration order after the Congress of Vienna. This usual association of nationalism with the revolution, however, changed at the turn of the century. With increasing tension between nations due to the competition of imperial expansion or conflicts against new independent neighbour states, nationalism in the established (either new or old) states gradually turned into exclusive, chauvinistic, and aggressive right-wing movement in Europe from the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Italian Fascism was a culmination of this mutation.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, Fascism inescapably contains some elements of nationalism which mostly emerged, evolved and transformed from liberal politics in nineteenth-century Europe. Historiography is one of the best examples of this. In general it is said that in the discourse of nationality progressive or democratic liberal nationalism stresses civic components of the nation, whereas conservative liberal nationalism focuses on the ethnic, cultural and linguistic aspects of the nation. Although the proportion varies, all nationalist histories in practice define the nation regardless of their political stance in these two ways. Fascist history writings alike encompass these two ideas of nationhood. The history narrative in the *Libro unico di Stato* epitomises this hybridity in the Fascist concept of nationality.

Like ethno-cultural nationalist discourses, the Fascist textbook's historiography principally defined the national identity with Italian language, culture and the idealised Italian national character. The concept of *Romanità-Italianità* and the Italo-centricity of the narrative served to consolidate this argument. As for vestiges of the civic nationalist discourse, we can recognise three elements in the Fascist schoolbook: emphasis on some civic values like liberty, independence, love of *Patria*, order and unity; attention to the development of civic institutions (the monarchy, the state, the regime and the Church); and the idea of a nation as the incarnation of human will.

However, the fact that Fascism borrowed some tropes and thematic concerns from liberal nationalism's discourse on nationality does not signify that Fascism and liberalism are identical in their notion of nationhood and use of historiography for the purpose of the nation-state building. First, unlike liberal nationalism, the Fascist national discourse is overall indifferent to

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<sup>88</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, pp. 24-50.

discussing the correlation between national characters and desirable citizenship for a democratic society. Thus, it hardly taught civic values as essential moral ties in the formation of a national society. Besides, Fascist historiography arbitrarily defines the national character and adopts an ambivalent position towards civic values in accordance with the regime's political interests. Moreover, very rarely is attention paid to the evolution of economic and cultural civic institutions in the Fascist text.

Likewise, it is true that Fascism not only has similarities but also differences with another totalitarian, extreme nationalist ideology, i.e., Nazism. Both, Fascism and Nazism, are very keen to stress language and culture in their definition of nationhood, and they attribute remarkably similar virtues to their national characters. Most importantly, both ideologies are firmly convinced of their nation's cultural, moral and spiritual superiority with which they justify aggressive expansionism. Yet differences are equally noticeable. The Fascist history manual is not as fanatical about racism as the National Socialist counterpart is; it is, unlike the Nazi text, devoid of biological determinism, physical stereotypes of nations, obsession with racial purity, and Anti-Semitism.

It is, therefore, certain that the Fascist history narrative also displays its own attempts to reshape the nationality and national identity. With the input of Fascist moral values and world view, the regime aimed to militarise the nation's spirit and behaviours and sought to secure its legitimacy and popularity. Heavy doses of heroism mingled with the cult of death and the Duce, and the Fascist perception of the world as a ground for the never-ending competition between nations were the major imprints that Fascism left on the history textbook.

Through the close analysis of the Fascist textbook, we have ascertained that Fascism tried to redefine the concept of the nation and nationhood in history education to complete the building of the nation-state and to transform Italy into an ideal Fascist country. Practical applications of such intention, however, were not entirely immune from established traditions of history writing, as we have seen in the *Libro unico di Stato*. The Fascist schoolbook's historical narratives on the nation inherited lots of ideas, languages, tropes, discursive techniques, thematic concerns, and messages from nationalism(s) in the liberal era. What Fascism actually did was therefore to redirect, manipulate and modify existing means and customs of history writing, by adding some Fascist elements to them, according to the political, social and ideological need of the regime. Nevertheless, it is not only the discourse of nationhood or national identity in which Fascism's presentation of history worked in this way. Rather, it might be correct to say that the Fascist historiography is on the whole based upon and made by the same method. In order to evaluate

this, we need to read the *Libro unico*'s historiography more closely and diachronically. The next chapter will analyse, again from the textbook's account, the regime's efforts to legitimise itself in the historical context from ancient to modern, which will illustrate how Fascism's own ideas, motivations, and arguments were interwoven with the pre-existing traditions of the use of history in Italian culture.

## V. Analysis of the Fascist School Textbooks

### 2: Legitimising Fascism in the Historical Trajectory

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In the previous chapter, this thesis analysed the Fascist regime's attempt to re-define the concept of the national identity and nationhood in the history school textbook as a crucial part of Fascism's nation-state building. Yet it was not enough for the regime to conceptualise Italian nationhood in its own right in order to broaden mass consensus. It also needed to justify Fascism itself and its seizure of power by demonstrating that it was the legitimate and inevitable consequence of the nation's historical trajectory, and thus was the ultimate ideology to lead Italy to its destiny. For this purpose, the Fascist government was willing to mobilise and manipulate representations of history, not only in public images, ceremonies and monuments but also in writings and speeches. This chapter thus aims to investigate how the narrative in the Fascist textbook tries to legitimise Fascism in the historical context.

On the whole, the Fascist regime's self-legitimation applied to the history textbook account roughly coincides with five principal narrative frameworks; the premise of Italy's historical destiny ('Civiliser of the world' and 'Empire of peace'), dichotomies of 'Two Italies' (good-evil / new-old / unity-division), tropes of historical continuity-discontinuity debates, the cult of heroes (and the Duce), and utopianism. For convenience of discussion, this thesis chapter analyse these narrative frameworks largely following a chronological order of history.

Like the regime's effort to re-define the nationality, its historical justification of Fascism in the narrative form was also an outcome of the complex combination of various existing and new ideas, languages, metaphor, narrative approaches, philosophies of history, and thematic concerns. During the *Ventennio*, moreover, the logic, tropes, and major topics discussed in schoolbooks evolved or changed in accordance with the vicissitudes and political need of the regime. The analysis in this chapter aims to demonstrate this argument.

#### **Pre-history, antiquity and the Roman era**

One can assume that history lessons for children in primary school might start with pre-historical topics such as the birth of human beings, the Stone Age and first civilisations. In Fascist history education, this was not the case. The Fascist history textbook of the third grader, -the first year history is taught-, begins with the Risorgimento and ends with Fascist Italy. Pre- and ancient history are not covered until the fourth grader's text. So, by chronological order, the analysis of this chapter will start from the fourth grader's book.

Even the fourth grader's coverage of antiquity, however, is different from the conventional chronological approach in history schoolbooks. The 1930s' edition of *Il libro della IV classe elementare* deals appropriately with historical topics before Roman history in chronological order: the improvement of tools from stones to metals, the beginning of agriculture and settlement, various ancient civilisations in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and ancient Greece and its influence on the early Italic inhabitants are all narrated one by one.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the 1940s' version shows remarkable indifference to everything (presumably) 'unrelated' to Ancient Rome; references to all earlier civilisations of Rome, even Greece, are removed and the textbook moves directly from the invention of metallic tools to pre-Roman peoples (Etruscans, Ligurians, and Latins) in Italy.<sup>2</sup> This change between the editions indicates that the Fascist historiography shifted its main concern in ancient history; it became less interested in describing the progress of humankind and placed more emphasis on the grandeur of Rome and *Romanità*.

What does this shift of concern signify? It reflects not only the origins and developments in the Fascist *Romanità* but also the regime's appropriation of ideology and history in accordance with its policy. In short, the Fascist *Romanità* first contained some products of liberalism's discourse of Rome. So, the first version of the Fascist textbook -the 1930s' edition- still described the progress of human civilisations, including Ettore Pais's academic argument of the Greek influence on early inhabitants in Italy.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the 1940s' edition entirely eliminates this description because progress and reason were no longer prime messages in the regime's history education. To get a fuller picture of the changing Fascist *Romanità*, we should first look into the development of *Romanità* from the Risorgimento to the Fascist era.

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<sup>1</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59-98. Since the text is entirely identical with the early 1930s' edition, this thesis will avoid to mention (or refer to) the late 1930s' version of the fourth grader.

<sup>2</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 127-30.

<sup>3</sup> The 1930s' book uses 4 pages to explain ancient Greek colonies in Italy and Sicily with large size photos; *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 92-95. For more about Pais's study of Greek colonies in South Italy, see Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece*, pp. 223-29.

### 1. *Romanità* from the Risorgimento to Fascism

The Fascist idea of *Romanità*, its image, perception and symbolism of Rome and Roman history, was descended from cultural traditions in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy. Since the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century when the Italian consciousness of nationhood was born, Rome had been regarded as the spiritual epicentre of the nation by many patriots and intellectuals. So, it was not only Mazzini who believed that Rome must be the capital of the unified Italy when the nation united. Also Garibaldi and his legionaries fought to 'liberate' the Eternal City from theocracy of the papal state; their famous battle cry, "*Roma o morte!* (Rome or death!)", became a symbolic phrase to express Italians' yearning for making the city a territory of the unified Italy.<sup>4</sup> Even neo-Guelphs like Vincenzo Gioberti, who preferred a rather loose form of political federation to the unified sovereign state, agreed that Rome should be the spiritual centre of all Italians, though they believed that the city must remain in the hands of the Holy See.<sup>5</sup> The glorious past of the Roman civilisation and the city's symbolism as the '*Caput Mundi*' was immeasurable. It was therefore an irresistible idea for those who longed for the resurgence of Italy, to make Rome the capital of the unified nation-state. Even Camillo di Cavour, one of the most pragmatic and realistic politicians in the Risorgimento, was unable to ignore the power of the myth of Rome. So, for the morale of the nation, he declared the Eternal City as the capital of the new Kingdom in 1861 even though it was still under the papal rule.<sup>6</sup>

The myth of Rome –the symbolic image or meaning of the city to the nation and the cult of its greatness– did not disappear after the Unification (1861) and the Italian army's occupation of Rome (1870). In 1881, Quintino Sella, who was a Piedmontese engineer and had served as the Minister of Finance three times, delivered speech in the Chamber of Deputies. He said:

"Who made us what we are? Who taught us to want a fatherland? Rome, nothing but Rome. [...] we owe everything we know, everything we think, everything we feel regarding patriotism, to ancient Rome. [...] I had

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<sup>4</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 10–12; E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 40–47. For more about the meaning of Rome and its psychological effect on Mazzini, Garibaldi, and other patriots in the Risorgimento, see Andrea Giardina and André Vauchez, *Il mito di Roma: Da Carlo Magno a Mussolini* (Rome–Bari: Laterza, 2000), pp. 177–92, or Daniel Pick, "'Roma o morte': Garibaldi, Nationalism and the Problem of Psycho-biography", *History Workshop*, no. 57 (2004), 1–34.

<sup>5</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 11–12; E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 41–43.

<sup>6</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 12.



not been to Rome, but the cult of this city was immense; we are Italians by virtue of Rome. [...] It was Rome that kept Italy alive.”<sup>7</sup>

As this speech testifies, the myth kept growing, evolving, and transfiguring itself in Liberal Italy. At first, the myth functioned as a positive inspirational force. Rome, the only unified state in the peninsula before the Kingdom of Italy, was considered as the incarnation of the nation’s unifying force. Also the city’s symbolism of universality and absence of strong regional particularism appealed as an antithetical force against regionalism and factionalism to those who were concerned about Italians’ lack of the national identity.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, together with the optimism and youthful energy of the new independent state, the nation’s pride in its glorious Roman past nourished aspirations to make the country healthy, prosperous, and great again.<sup>9</sup>

However, the myth of Rome had an unintended side-effect as well. When the motivation to catch up with advanced neighbours like Britain, France and Germany became an obsession, the admiration of the past glories created a national inferiority complex. As a result, pride of the Italian nation and its glorious past was used to support aggressive expansionism and colonialism in the name of Italy’s historical mission and practical needs. In other words, from the last decades of the nineteenth century, with the Crispi government’s colonial enterprises in Africa, liberal nationalists in Italy mobilised *Romanità* to justify the country’s expansionist policy; now Mazzini’s Rome in the unified Italy –the harbinger, exemplar and teacher of democracy, fraternity, liberty and humanity– transmuted into a symbol of power, domination, and hegemony in the Mediterranean as the nationalists hailed ‘*mare nostrum*’.<sup>10</sup>

We have seen positive receptions of Rome so far, whatever effect it had. Yet the connotation of the Eternal City was not always positive in Liberal Italy. There were also negative receptions

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<sup>7</sup> “Chi dunque ci ha fatto quali siamo, chi c’insegnò a volere una patria? Roma, niente altro che Roma. [...] ma noi, tutto ciò che sappiamo, tutto ciò che pensiamo, tutto ciò che sentiamo in fatto di patriottismo, lo dobbiamo all’antica Roma. [...] Io non ero stato a Roma, ma il culto che si aveva per questo paese era immenso; siamo italiani per virtù di Roma. [...] fu Roma che la [Italia] tenne viva.” Sella gave this speech 14th March in 1881. Quotation and translation in E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, p. 44. The original Italian text of this speech is quoted in the same book’s Italian edition; Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia: il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2006), p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 12; Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 177–92.

<sup>9</sup> Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 185–99.

<sup>10</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 23–25; E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, pp. 47–48.

of Rome. For many, especially northerner Italians, Rome seemed to be a counter symbol or an obstacle to the country's modernisation and improvement. For over a millennium, the city had been the centre of the papacy which was regarded to represent the oppression of freedom and democracy. Its inhabitants, therefore, seriously lacked the tradition of municipal autonomy or self-governance. Economically, in this view, Rome symbolised backwardness as well. The city did not have a considerable manufacturing industry; for centuries the city relied on income from foreign tourists or on the ecclesiastical beneficence. So, its inhabitants were scorned as fraudulent inn keepers, stall sellers, tour guides, lazy custodians of museums, or beggars. This negative image of Rome, in fact, existed even before the Risorgimento. Hence, in the age of the Risorgimento and the early years of the unified Kingdom, there were some who opposed making Rome as the capital of Italy.<sup>11</sup> For instance, a liberal reformist Stefano Jacini once argued that the idea of making Rome the capital did "not respond to the need of a new Italy" and was just the "makeup of a decrepit Italy"; he concluded that this idea had nothing to do with the new Italy, that is, "the Italy that we yearned for which must walk the road of freedom and progress."<sup>12</sup>

Such a negative symbolism of Rome and the opposition to it, like its positive counterpart, stayed alive in Liberal Italy. In particular, when the government's ambitious plans went seriously wrong –military disasters in Dogali (1887) and Adowa (1896), the collapse of urban re-development bubbles in Rome, failing to redress the *Mezzogiorno* problem etc.– this negative perception of Rome was used to highlight the failure of liberalism and parliamentary democracy. Rome, for many critics of liberal politics, signified impotence, corruption, decadence, deficiency, and inefficient bureaucracy; Rome for them became the embodiment of *Italiotta* (Little Italy), i.e., shameful aspects of the present Italy rather than a source of inspiration to reclaim Italy's greatness in the future. Futurists and the Florentine avant-gardes such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Giuseppe Prezzolini, and Giovanni Papini insisted on forgetting or even destroying the city's monuments and museums in order to make Italy a forward-looking nation.<sup>13</sup>

The ambivalent conception of Fascist *Romanità* in the early years of the movement was formed under the influence of these two contradictory perceptions of Rome in the Risorgimento and

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<sup>11</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 12–15; Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 187–88.

<sup>12</sup> "L'idea di Roma sede di Governo [...] non risponde ai bisogni dell'Italia nuova; è il belletto di un'Italia decrepita [...], e non l'ornamento di quell'Italia che vagheggiamo e che deve percorrere le vie della libertà e del progresso [...]." This speech was delivered in the Senate 23th January 1871. Quotation in Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 187–88.

<sup>13</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 14–23.

Liberal Italy. Fascists on the one hand worshiped Rome not only as a reminder of the nation's glorious past but also as the historical evidence of quintessential Italian virtues such as discipline, military capacity, intelligence and industriousness. On the other hand, they did not conceal their hatred of the city as an epitome of liberalism, clericalism, and the bourgeois inertia. As many historians have demonstrated, it is well known that Mussolini had fiercely criticised Rome as an "enormous vampire city that sucks the nation's best blood" in his socialist years and was not reluctant to express, albeit in an indirect and moderate way, his negative conception of the city even after becoming leader of the Fascists.<sup>14</sup> Yet Mussolini was not the only Fascist who had such an ambivalent perception of the Eternal City. Giuseppe Bottai, a native roman, and later the Mayor of Rome and the Minister of Education in the Fascist regime, wrote as early as 1920:

"Rome, [...] in the spirit of its people, in the passion of its citizens today, in the consciousness of its people, is Italy's most degenerate city. It doesn't care: this is the fundamental maxim of its wisdom; but its indifference is fruitless, its caustic attitude destroys without recreating, its arrogance stems from the void to gush vainly into the void. [...] We, its true sons, [...] prefer to frog it, until it bleeds with words of hatred, which are also words of love."<sup>15</sup>

It was, however, not solely discourses of politicians and writers in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy which left clear marks on the Fascist *Romanità*. Professional scholars in Liberal Italy and

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<sup>14</sup> Mussolini in 1910 called Rome an "enorme città-vampiro che succhia il miglior sangue della nazione". Twelve years later, a month before March on Rome in Udine, he stated "noi [Fascists] pensiamo di fare di Roma, [...] cioè, depurata, disinfettata, da tutti gli elementi che la corrompono e la infangano."; quoted in Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, p. 213 and Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, II, 309. On Mussolini's and Fascist ambivalent reception of Rome, see (or listen) Antonio Cederna, *Mussolini urbanista: lo sventramento di Roma negli anni del consenso* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1980), pp. 29-36; E. Gentile, *9 maggio 1936*; Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 212-20.

<sup>15</sup> "Roma, [...] nell'animo della sua gente viva, nella passione dei suoi cittadini di oggi, nella coscienza del suo popolo in carne ed ossa, ell'è la più porca città d'Italia. Se ne frega: e questo è l'ultimo motto della sua saggezza; ma il suo menefreghismo è sterile, la sua vena caustica distrugge senza ricreare, la sua strafottenza parte dal vuoto per zampillar vanamente nel vuoto. [...] Noi, i suoi figli veri, [...] preferiamo staffilarla a sangue con parole di odio, che sono anche parole d'amore." This writing was first published in *L'Ardito* 29 February 1920 and later reprinted in Bottai's journal, *Critica fascista*. Quotations in Giuseppe Bottai, *Pagine di Critica fascista (1915-1926)*, ed. by F. M. Paces (Florence: Le Monnier, 1941), pp. 80-81.

subsequently in the *Ventennio* also contributed to the formation and dissemination of Fascist *Romanità*. During and after the First World War, Italian academic culture increasingly became conservative and nationalistic. It is therefore unsurprising that many scholars in history, archaeology, and antiquity had no difficulty to embrace, or at least passively concede to, Fascism when Mussolini seized power.<sup>16</sup> Prior to the March on Rome, there had already been a number of academics who were publicly supportive or sympathetic to the Fascist movement. Many others were not as faithful to Fascist ideology but willingly cooperated with the regime in academic activities.<sup>17</sup> No matter how much they were involved in politics and no matter how firmly they believed in Fascism, their scholarly works left imprints on Fascist *Romanità* and helped to boost its 'scientific' credibility and popular reception. In return, these scholars enjoyed the patronage and honour given by the regime; Ettore Pais's writing and editorship in his academic journal, art historian/archaeologist Corrado Ricci and antiquarian Antonio Muñoz's energetic involvement in the projects to excavate or 'restore' ancient monuments in central Rome, and archaeologist Giulio Quirino Giglioli's directorship of the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (Exhibition of the Augustan Rome, 1937–38) are good examples.<sup>18</sup>

What was the consequence, then, of these influences on the Fascist *Romanità* discourse? In other words, what does Fascist *Romanità* in the narrative form look like? Fascist exaltation of Rome mingled with their hatred of the city's mediocrity and inferiority. This love-hate psyche of Fascists made them obsessed with the Italian greatness; as the one who blamed liberalism for

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<sup>16</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 32; Mariella Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero fascista* (Bari: Dedalo, 1979), pp. 15–33; Gabriele Turi, *Lo stato educatore: Politica e intellettuali nell'Italia fascista* (Rome: Laterza, 2002), pp. 18–21.

<sup>17</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 32–33. Also there is a very recent and detail study on academic collaborations under Fascism regarding the question of Italian ethnic origins; see Antonino De Francesco, *The Antiquity of the Italian Nation: the Cultural Origins of a Political Myth in Modern Italy, 1796–1943* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), especially chapter 6 and 7.

<sup>18</sup> On Pais and his journal *Historia*, see Jan Nelis, *From ancient to modern: the myth of Romanità during the ventennio fascista* (Brussel–Rome: Belgian Historical Institute in Rome, 2011), pp. 161–68. For Ricci and Muñoz's role in archaeological projects in Rome, refer to Cederna, *Mussolini urbanista*, pp. 121–56, 167–232. Joshua Arthurs studied *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* under Giglioli's directorship; see Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 91–124. For more examples refer to Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 29–49 and Alessandro Guidi, 'Nationalism without a Nation: the Italian case' in *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe*, eds. by Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Timothy Champion (London: UCL Press, 1996), pp. 108–18.

*Italietta* and came to power as the alternative, Fascism must propose a different vision for Italy. The answer was to highlight the Roman greatness and to promise its restoration, particularly the Roman Empire. Fascists, however, also needed respectability to secure and stabilise their regime. Embracing established scholars and their academic work was one of the ways in which the Fascist regime not only added plausibility into its own version of *Romanità* but also reached a compromise with the old ruling blocks (the Monarch, the Church, business interests, and the conservative political groups) of the country.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, this Fascist *Romanità* in the 1920s and the early 30s evolved and transformed as the regime's power gradually became secure (though it turned out a misjudgement later), and launched the full drive for a totalitarian state. We can ascertain all of these –inherited elements of *Romanità* and Fascist own touches– by a close reading of historical narratives in the Fascist school textbook.

## 2. Quantitative analysis of language in the textbook narration

Before analysing the narrative contents, it would be helpful to look into quantitative data of keywords used through the entire pages of the *Libro IV classe*'s ancient history section, which exposes the main thematic concerns and messages of the textbook.

Historians Andrea Giardina and André Vauchez assess that the two most profound values of the Fascist *Romanità* were discipline and power.<sup>20</sup> Quantitative analysis of words in the history textbook confirms this argument; language directly related to these two attributes are frequently used in all editions of the *Libro IV classe*. For instance, the word of '*potenza / forza*' (power, strength) or '*potente*' (powerful) is mentioned 67 times in a total 93 pages of the 1932 edition – more than once in every two pages.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the languages of discipline and order, such as *disciplina* (discipline), *ordine / disordine* (order / disorder), *obbedire* (to obey), *gerarchia* (hierarchy), *autorità* (authority), *legge* (law), appear 52 times in total during the 1930s' text, and the figure remains nearly the same in the later edition (49 times).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>20</sup> Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, p. 279.

<sup>21</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59–151. This figure decreased (56 times) in the 1940s edition but regarding the reduction of total pages in the later edition, the actual rate of the word's appearance per page increased from 0.72 to 0.83 in the part of ancient history.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 126–92. As a result the frequency of use increases from 0.55 to 0.73 per page.

So, how can these virtues be obtained? What is the secret to be powerful and disciplined? The Fascist textbook teaches children that power and discipline derive from militancy and unity. Again, we can find evidence of it by simply counting relevant terms in the school textbook. Except 'Italy / Italians' or 'Rome / Romans', the most heavily used expressions in the text are those related to war and military; words like *guerra* (war), *battaglia* (battle), *litigare* (to fight), *combattimento* (combat) are cited 135 times and military words like *esercito* (army), *armi* (weapons), *spada* (sword), *truppa* (troops) arise 61 times in the 1930s' edition. Combined, therefore, languages of war and military are in total used 196 times which means that the readers might encounter them 2.1 times on average in every page. Things are similar in the 1940s' version; it used these kinds of words 186 times on aggregate (the former 115 times, the latter 71 times). Given that there are fewer pages relating to ancient history in this edition, the frequency of use actually increases (2.77 times per page).<sup>23</sup> Also words representing militant traits, such as *valore* (valour), *coraggioso* (courageous), *tenace* (tenacious), *ardito* (daring), *bellicoso* (bellicose), often appear in all editions; 70 times in the 1930s' book and 52 times in the 1940s' one, equivalent to 0.75 and 0.77 times per page.<sup>24</sup> This indicates that the Fascist textbook not only teaches heavily military-oriented historiography but also highly underlines militaristic values.

As for the message of unity, quantitative data in the 1930s' text at first glance seem less convincing; words like *unità* (unity), *armonia / concordia* (harmony), *divisione* (division), *traditore* (traitor), are seen 24 times, just 0.25 times a page. Yet, the frequency surges to 0.56 per page (38 times on aggregate) in the later edition,<sup>25</sup> which implies that the author intensified stress upon the importance of unity. Moreover, if we include '*lotta*' and '*scontro*', which can mean either 'fighting' or 'discord / disagreement' depending on the context, in this count, the total figures add up to 35 (1930s') and 62 times (1940s'), that is, 0.37 and 0.92 times per page.<sup>26</sup>

What is, then, the consequence of being a powerful and disciplined nation? For what purpose should Italy be potent and well-ordered? Fascism's answer is hegemonic, especially in territorial sense, empire which is more recognisable from the quantitative data collected in the later edition. At first, the word of *impero / imperatore / imperiale* (empire / emperor / imperial) is used with

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<sup>23</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 126-92.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

almost equal frequency in both editions.<sup>27</sup> The difference is that the 1930s' schoolbook mentions the words of domination or hegemony, like *dominazione* (domination), *superiorità* (superiority), and *espansione / allargamento* (expansion), only twice, while the same words were used much more (13 times) in the 1940s' edition.<sup>28</sup> Apparently, 13 times in 67 pages is not so high frequency. Nevertheless, as the regime's aspiration of 'domination' was primarily territorial in its ultimate blueprint for a Fascist Empire, we should also include words like *colonia* (colony), *territorio* (territory), *terra* (land), and *conquistare* (to conquest) into the calculation. If so, the total sum is 54 times (2 plus 52) in the 1930s' text, and 92 times (13 plus 79) in the 1940s' one, which equate to 0.55 and 1.37 times a page.<sup>29</sup> This frequency is considerably higher.

Accordingly, the quantitative data of counting the words used supports the idea that the Fascist historiography in the textbook is teleological; the ultimate goal was to legitimise Italy's pursuit of being a Fascist empire as its historical right, destiny, and duty. Yet, the textbook account suggests that the Italian empire, from Rome to Fascism, is not simply territorial great power that ruthlessly conquers and oppresses other peoples. Rather it preaches to children that Italy's empire has always been, and always would be, (with Fascism) the empire of 'civilisation-builders' and of 'peace'. This is one of the principal messages and main pillars in the Fascist schoolbook's teleological history, which a close reading of the text will illustrate later in the thesis.

This thesis has, in the previous chapter, argued that the Fascist (re)definition of nationality in the textbook was comprised of ideas descended from both ethno-cultural nationalism and civic nationalism. Evidence from quantitative analysis of keywords in the textbook account also supports this. The ancient history part of *Libro IV classe* contains significant amount of ethno-cultural nationalist and civic nationalist vocabularies. Words like *terra*, *territorio*, *stirpe / razza* (stock / race), *colto* (cultured), and *civiltà* (civilisation / culture), which are regarded important in ethno-cultural nationalism's concept of the nation, are mentioned 33 times (0.35/p) in the 1930s' edition and 57 times (0.85/p) in the later one.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, civic nationalism's keywords such as *giustizia* (justice), *libertà* (liberty), *indipendenza* (independence), *Patria* (Fatherland), *cittadino /*

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; 75 times in the 1930s' edition (0.83/p), 58 times in the 1940s' text (0.86/p).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid; additionally, given the Fascist regime's main territorial interest, we could also take into account of the word, '*il Mediterraneo*' (Mediterranean) in this category. 'The Mediterranean' is mentioned 9 (1930s') and 20 times (1940s') in total, which again shows the increase of its frequency in the later edition.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

*cittadinanza* (citizen / citizenship), and *repubblica* (republic) are cited 47 times (1930s') and 39 times (1940s'), which is equivalent to 0.50 and 0.58 times per page.<sup>31</sup>

Care, however, should be taken with the data of civic nationalist vocabularies. Seemingly it appears that the Fascist textbook emphasises more civic nationalist conceptions than the ethno-cultural counterparts. Things are not so simple though. First of all, in the *Libro unico*, there is no civic nationalist keyword appears more than '*terra / territorio*', a typical ethno-cultural language. Even the most cited civic nationalist word, *cittadino / cittadinanza*, which emerges as equal as '*terra / territorio*' in the 1930s' text, is not actually used to discuss 'citizenship' in the majority of its appearances. Rather it is just used to indicate the residents of a city or to connote 'citizen-soldiers'.<sup>32</sup>

Another problem is terms directly related to the Church like *cattolicesimo* (Catholicism), *cristiani* (Christians), *Papa* (Pope), *chiesa* (church), *Gesù* (Jesus) etc.<sup>33</sup> Although the Church is categorised in Chapter IV as one of the key-concepts in civic nationalism, the Fascist appropriation of it in the textbook account is different from the conventional civic nationalist (liberals' civic nationalism) use and perception. While in liberal civic nationalism the Church is one of the civil institutions, which are conceived as the outcomes of autonomous and spontaneous agency of the civil society, the Fascist schoolbook's historiography underlines the Church (and Catholicism) as a fundamental part of *Italianità*, instead. Thus the narrative in the textbook focuses on linking Catholicism with 'healthy' traditions of Romans, glorifying the Church's contributions to the world, and stressing the early Christians' discipline, sacrifice, and intransigent faith rather than teaching core messages of Christianity such as fraternity, mercy, humility, and peace which could be good civic virtues.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid; '*cittadino / cittadinanza*' appears 20 (1930s') and 7 (1940s') times whereas '*terra / territorio*' is mentioned 20 (1930s') and later 42 times. All other civic nationalist vocabularies, except *Patria* (13 / 11 times), are rarely used, i.e., less than 10 times each. In addition, the exact word of '*cittadinanza*' is used only twice in the 1930s' book and this number declines to nil in the 1940s'. This signifies not only that the word, 'citizen', is hardly accompanied by the meaning of 'citizenship' in the both editions but also that the 1940s' textbook intensifies ethno-cultural nationalist characters decreasing civic nationalist elements.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid; these words appear 23 (1930s') and 20 times (1940s') on aggregate which is considerable numbers regarding that Christianity only occupied the last couple of centuries in thousand-years of the Roman history.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



Yet, simply counting certain words is not enough to verify the message that the Fascist textbook teaches and how it does so. The word of '*terra*', for example, is not always used to indicate territories or lands of the nation; "*tracciavano solchi sulla terra* (they made furrows on the land)" obviously has a different connotation from "*mosse alla conquista di nuove terre* (moved towards the conquest of new lands)".<sup>35</sup> So, in the next part, this thesis will engage in close reading of the textbook in order to prove the arguments suggested above.

### 3. Which Rome? Republic or Empire? What kind of Empire?: *Romanità* in the textbooks

Since the Renaissance, Ancient Rome has for many humanist writers and thinkers epitomised republicanism. Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni praised Romans in the republican era for their high moral standards, dignity and liberty; Machiavelli numerously compared his native city Florence with the ideal historical model of republican states, Rome.<sup>36</sup> Through the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, such an idealised perception of the Roman Republic was strengthened; many historians and antiquarians attributed the Roman success –territorial expansion, military power, splendid culture, advanced technology and civil engineering etc.– to the virtue of Roman people in the republican epoch. With the same logic, they reasoned that Rome had fallen because its citizens during the imperial era had gradually degenerated in morality and as a result lost 'healthy' virtues and traditions.<sup>37</sup> This was a dilemma for the Fascist regime. From the start, Fascism had hunger for national glories and territorial expansion and also chose to compromise with the monarchy when it came to power in 1922. Subsequently, the Fascist regime's ideal model of the nation-state was, at least until July 1943, not a republic but an empire. Mussolini's government, therefore, had empathy for the Roman Empire but it was difficult to rebut the claim

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<sup>35</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 131, 165.

<sup>36</sup> Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 70–72; Anna Maria Cabrini, 'Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. by John M. Najemy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 128–43; John M. Najemy, 'Society, class, and state in Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*', in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 96–111; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli and Rome: the republic as ideal and as history', in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 144–56.

<sup>37</sup> Edward Gibbon and his book, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* might be the most renowned for such an interpretation of the imperial Rome. See Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 72, 165–67; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Between Machiavelli and Hume: Gibbon as Civic Humanist and Philosophical Historian', *Daedalus*, 105, no.3 (1976), 153–69.

that Rome had been more energetic and dynamic in the republican era and therefore had grown faster. How did the regime cope with this dilemma in history education?

Like many Romantic or liberal historiographies, the Fascist textbook lauds numerous virtuous individual Romans in the republican era before Marius and Sulla for their patriotism, heroism and sense of justice; Lucius Junius Brutus, Caius Mucius Scaevola, Cincinnatus, Marcus Atilius Regulus, Scipio Africanus, the Gracchus brothers and so on. Yet what is different is that the Fascist text barely tries to attribute the virtues of these individuals to the essence or the benefit of Roman republicanism. In the textbook, there is no direct statement to remind readers that these Romans believed in democratic or republican principles. Instead, it is suggested that they committed heroic or patriotic deeds only for the sake of *Patria* which is vaguely conceptualised but certainly not identified with the republican state apparatus.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the textbook pays little attention to Roman republicanism and its political institutions. Just half a page is given to explaining political institutions of the Roman Republic and even this paragraph barely mentions consuls and the Senate; no other elected / executive magistrates (tribunes, praetors, censors etc.) are discussed. Instead, most of this half-page section covers *Lictor* –the symbol of Roman consul's authority–, and the role of the dictator in emergency.<sup>39</sup> The intention is clear; to imply Fascism's inheritance of *Romanità* and to justify Mussolini, the dictator. The textbook itself does not disguise this intention saying;

"we must be proud that it [lictor] has **risen again**, we must remember for how many centuries it was glorious and respected, and we must look at it again as a sign and symbol of prompt and complete devotion to the Fatherland."<sup>40</sup>

As a whole, the textbook's historiography of the Roman Republic is mostly stories of heroic individuals, military campaigns and territorial expansions. It displays little interest in anything else –political systems, economy, daily life, and culture– in the heyday of the Republic. On the

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<sup>38</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp.102–22; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 136–59.

<sup>39</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 102–3; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 136.

<sup>40</sup> "noi dobbiamo essere orgogliosi che essa [lictor] sia ora risorta, dobbiamo ricordarci per quanti secoli fu gloriosa e rispettata e dobbiamo guardarla come segno e simbolo di pronta e completa devozione alla patria."; *Libro IV classe* (1932), p. 103 (Bold by me). Also the book provides two heroic episodes of dictators (Marcus Furius Camillus and Cincinnatus) in the republican Rome which are much longer than the explanation of the Republic's political system; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 136–41.

contrary to this indifference, the textbook is eager to describe symptoms of decadence, disorder and internal conflicts in the later years of the Republic. Both editions of the book state signs of the Republic's (spiritual, moral, economic) decline after the Punic War.<sup>41</sup> In addition, they encompass the exceptionally long coverage of internal conflicts and civil wars from Marius to Augustus's eventual seizure of power.<sup>42</sup> The aim of this approach is to vindicate the historical inevitability of Rome's transformation from a republic to an empire. Fascism, without doubt, was not the first to suggest this. Before Fascism, numerous Italian or European imperialist discourses and scholarly works (therefore, regarded academically objective) had argued the same.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the point is that this is the same narrative strategy adopted in the textbook's account of Liberal Italy; to suggest Italy's inevitable mutation from liberalism to Fascism by highlighting disorder and instability in the final years of the parliamentary democracy.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, it is also the case that the textbook pays scant attention to the social, political, economic, and cultural vicissitudes in Liberal Italy except hero stories and military events as it does so in the narration of the Roman Republic.<sup>45</sup>

This narrative tactic actually reflects the important rhetorical dichotomy which constantly flows through the textbook account; dichotomy of 'unity and division' which is a part or variation of the 'Two (new-old / good-bad) Italies' rhetoric. As I have argued in the quantitative analysis, unity is a key concept in ancient history of the textbook. Yet, more precisely, unity is a significant

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<sup>41</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 121-22; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 157-58. Even this part of the 1940s' book is entitled 'Forza senz'ordine: occorre un capo'. As for the relevant quotation in the 1930's text, refer to the footnote no. 17 in Chapter III of this thesis.

<sup>42</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 123-31; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 159-72. Both editions spend more pages for this period (the end of the Republic) than for the Punic War.

<sup>43</sup> According to antiquarians, it was actually chroniclers and historians in the ancient world who first accused moral degeneracy of the Roman Republic's decline; A. W. Lintott, 'Imperial Expansion and Moral Decline in the Roman Republic', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 21, 4 (1972), 626-38. Needless to say, there were also plenty of thinkers and writers in modern times who proposed the same idea (and some of them consequently advocated inevitability of the Empire); for some examples, see Frank M. Turner, 'British Politics and the Demise of the Roman Republic: 1700-1939', *The Historical Journal*, 29, 3 (1986), 577-99.

<sup>44</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 193-97; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 181-83.

<sup>45</sup> For example, there is no single comment on the mass emigration, rapid urbanisation, organised crimes, elections and suffrage in all editions of the textbook. See, *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 180-97; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 170-83.

value in the entire historiography of the Fascist schoolbook. The textbook underlines unity by contrasting it with division. Basically, historiography in *Libro unico di Stato* tends to blame any kind of division (factionalism, disobedience, treason etc.) for every troubled or humiliating moment in Italian history, whereas it suggests that the nation's glory and success is due to unity, discipline and cooperation. In this sense, the long description of factional fighting and turmoil in the late Roman Republic can be conceived as the part of this dichotomy.

Simultaneously, this narrative tactic is one of the textbook's responses to the debate of historical 'continuity-discontinuity'. The Fascist schoolbook often omits or underplays certain historical periods; particularly episodes and figures perceived to be embarrassing or unfavourable for Fascism. Conversely, it sometimes overstates a favourable epoch disproportionately. This odd periodisation is a typical narrative tool of the discontinuity thesis but it is, ironically, used to recount the nation's history as a more organic and coherent trajectory of *Romanità* (then *Italianità*) in the Fascist text. By recounting lengthy episodes of heroism and war in the republican era, and by skipping all other (supposedly) unnecessary aspects, the textbook account depicts Roman history as seemingly continuous, though not always well-preserved, succession of *Romanità* from the foundation to the Empire. In this Fascist drama, Roman history is told as the story of Roman virtues which constantly ebbed and flowed, but were eventually inherited to *Italianità* and Catholicism in the Middle Ages.<sup>46</sup>

In the imperial era, the focus of the textbook changes; there are less military conquests, more stories of 'civilising mission', that is, construction, development, peace, order, and security. Of course it is a historical fact that Rome had accomplished most of its territorial expansions in the republican era and became rather defensive under imperial rule. The important thing is, however, that the textbook account presents imperial Rome as the Empire of 'peace' and of the 'civiliser'. While any statement of the Roman Republic's art and culture is hardly seen, the Fascist manual enumerates great monuments, architectures and other cultural achievements produced in the imperial era. Chronologically recounting reigns of Roman emperors, the 1930s' book admires many grand monuments built by Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>47</sup> Also some famous poets, writers, and even a patron of culture in imperial Rome are mentioned; Virgil,

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<sup>46</sup> This pattern of the ups and downs occurs twice in the Roman history according to the textbook; from the foundation to the Augustan era and then from the early Empire to the end of antiquity (with the rise of Christianity).

<sup>47</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 136-40.

Horace, Titus Livy, Pliny the Elder, and Gaius Maecenas.<sup>48</sup> Such a tendency is more visible in the 1940s' edition. The book not only extends the pages on how the Roman Empire built roads, bridges, aqueducts, forums and theatres, and 'civilised' the world but also includes a lengthy description, titled '*Monumenti imperiali*' (Imperial monuments), on great Roman architectures, with many illustrations.<sup>49</sup> It might be enough just to quote some phrases to illustrate this point:

"There [beyond the border, there were], people without houses, lands without roads, abandoned fields; here [inside the border] civilisation. And to defend and build new houses, [...] to enjoy a fair peace, a Roman peace, the borders had to be fortified."<sup>50</sup>

"Now, instead, cities are multiplying with straight roads, towers, walls, real houses, monumental buildings, [...] cultivated fields, [...] metallurgic industry and woollen mills. [...] this happened in almost every land: [...] Roman civilisation gave its benefits to all."<sup>51</sup>

"Thermal baths and circuses, columns and arches, buildings, and enchanting gardens are found in every street. New bridges connect river banks, [...] new laws establish order where disorder reigned."<sup>52</sup>

The idea to interpret the Roman Empire as a civiliser of the world and a bringer of peace was not originally a Fascist invention. It also stemmed from the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy, and specifically took its shape from the colonial enterprise of liberal nationalists.<sup>53</sup> Yet, under

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<sup>48</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 133, 138.

<sup>49</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 178-83; all monuments directly related to Mussolini's urban redevelopment projects in central Rome are handled in this section (Only the Ara Pacis is mentioned in previous ages).

<sup>50</sup> "Al di là, uomini senza case, terre senza strade, campi abbandonati; al di qua, la civiltà. E per difendere e costruire nuove case, [...] per godere una giusta pace, una pace romana, fu necessario rendere forti i confini."; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 173.

<sup>51</sup> "Ora, invece, vi si moltiplicano le città con vie diritte, torri, mura, vere case, edifici monumentali, [...] campi coltivati, [...] qualche industria di metallurgia e qualche lanificio. [...] così avvenne quasi in ogni terra: [...] la civiltà di Roma dette a tutti i suoi benefici."; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 174.

<sup>52</sup> "Terme e circhi, colonne, ed archi, palazzi, e giardini incantevoli sorgono in ogni strada. Nuovi ponti uniscono le rive dei fiumi, [...] nuove leggi stabiliscono l'ordine dove regnava il disordine."; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 177.

<sup>53</sup> Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero*, pp. 15-33; Ilaria Porciani, 'Stato e nazione: l'immagine debole dell'Italia', in *Fare gli Italiani*, 2 vols, eds. by Simonetta Soldani and Gabriele Turi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), I, pp. 385-428 (especially, pp. 422-28).

Fascism, this idea developed into a more elaborate discussion on the nature of Italian and other European colonialisms. According to Fascism, Italian (more precisely Fascist) colonial expansion is morally superior to its British or French counterparts; because British or French colonialism is driven by mercantile or commercial interests and its primary aim is economic exploitation, whereas Fascist colonial expansion, like the Roman one, is not about exploitation but to meet the nation's demographic and agricultural needs.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, Fascism argues that Italian colonisation brings a huge benefit to both Italy and subjugated indigenous peoples because Italian colonisers, as the Romans did, develop the territory (i.e., build infrastructures) and improve local culture, customs and technology in order to fully utilise the resources in its colonies.<sup>55</sup> This argument is reflected in the stress placed on the Roman Empire as the 'peace-giver' and 'civiliser' in the textbook.

With the advent of Anti-Semitism and the Racial Laws (1938) in the second half of the 1930s, the discourse on the nature of imperialisms became heavily involved in the debate on racial theories. Interpretation of the Punic War is one example. In Fascist Italy, there was a popular idea which interpreted the Punic War as the clash between Roman agricultural / civilising expansionism and Carthage's commercial (therefore exploitative) colonialism. In academic and political discourses, this interpretation was easily extended to the contemporary international power-politics so that antagonism between the Fascist Empire and other plutocratic capitalist imperialisms (usually the British Empire or the Jewish cosmopolitanism) was regarded as an equivalent or revival of the ancient Roman-Carthaginian conflict.<sup>56</sup> Such rhetoric or discussion, however, is entirely absent in the school textbook. Although both editions of *Libro IV classe* depict Carthage as a mercantile empire, this recognition neither evolves to define the Punic War as a clash of the good (Rome, agricultural settler-coloniser) versus the evil (Carthage, commercial exploiter-coloniser) colonialism nor invites any comparison with the twentieth century imperialisms.<sup>57</sup> Why, then, is this much debated topic missing from the textbook? Does this imply that the Fascist regime only pretended to embrace racial theories and Anti-Semitic

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<sup>54</sup> Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero*, pp. 35-55.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 140; Cagnetta, *Antichisti e impero*, pp. 89-95; Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 263-64. Fabrizio De Donno explains how the idea of comparing the Roman-Carthaginian war to the conflict between modern Imperialisms developed and how it affected Italian nationalist and Fascist (especially, Pais) discourse of Roman history; see De Donno, 'Orientalism and Classicism'.

<sup>57</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp.112-21; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 148-55.

ideology to please its more powerful ally, Nazi Germany? What was the reality of racial theories in Fascist Italy and how did it affect Roman history in the school textbook?

So-called 'scientific' racial theories were already in vogue in nineteenth century Europe. There were also racial discourses in Italy at that time, but it was only from the beginning of the twentieth century when Italian scientists and scholars developed their consciousness of racial issues into academic theories.<sup>58</sup> From then on, two main theories surrounding Italian racial origins existed until the Fascist era; one was Mediterraneanism which highlighted Italians' unique traits and their attachment to the Mediterranean basin and tended to differentiate Italians from Northern European nations. Many Mediterraneanists indicated Africa as the geographical origin of Italian race; the other was Nordicism which stressed superiority of the Nordic race asserting that they were the epitome of Aryans, and therefore Italian proponents of this theory categorised Italians as one of the descendent nations of pre-history Nordics.<sup>59</sup> It was in the mid-1930s onwards with the arrival of the Fascist Empire and colonial policies when the debate between these two theories attracted attention in academic and cultural spheres. First, Mussolini backed the Nordicists who were not only influenced by German racial theoreticians but also Anti-Semitism. Mussolini preferred this theory to justify Racial Laws and racial segregation in African colonies which eventually led to the Manifesto of Racial Scientists (1938). However, his embrace of a theory based on racial hierarchy and its Anti-Semitic stance, as Aron Gillette expounds, was neither to simply imitate Nazi Germany nor to legitimise his policy. The *Duce*, who was always dissatisfied with his compatriots' lack of bellicose spirit and harshness, felt an extreme measure was needed to accelerate the transformation of Italians into an ideal Fascist nation, i.e., tenacious conquerors. Identifying with tough Nordics and victimising a minority ethnic group (Jews) was his choice to harden the nation.<sup>60</sup> Traditionally, in Italy, race or ethnicity was predominantly perceived in cultural-spiritual terms, not in biological terms. So, Italian public opinion, including many Fascists, still favoured the less biologically deterministic theory – Mediterraneanism –, and was more hostile to Racial Laws than the Duce had expected. Thus Mussolini quickly distanced himself from Nordicism and expressed more culturally racist views

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<sup>58</sup> Fabrizio De Donno, 'La Razza Ario-Mediterranea: Ideas of Race and Citizenship in Colonial and Fascist Italy, 1885-1941', *Interventions*, 8, 3 (2006), 394-412; Aron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 10-34.

<sup>59</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 135; Gillette, *Racial Theories*, pp. 19-49.

<sup>60</sup> Gillette, *Racial Theories*, pp. 52-56.

and Mediterraneanist ideas as early as 1939.<sup>61</sup> Since then, debates between the two theories continued without a decisive winner; Mediterraneanism especially variations combined with cultural and spiritual concepts of race prevailed overall, but the Nordicism argument of biological determinism, racial hierarchy, the Aryan-Italo lineage, and disdain of Jews also stood firm until the downfall of Fascist Italy. Indeed, the term 'Aryan' to indicate Italian racial origins and Anti-Semitism survived in the official propaganda of the government on the racial issue until the end of the *Ventennio*.<sup>62</sup>

We can detect this aspect of racial debates in the *Ventennio* in the Ancient history part of the textbook as well. First, the concept of the Italian nation in all editions of the textbook is primarily cultural and spiritual. There is no description of 'typical' Italian physical appearance, no biological definition of (any) race and no mention of racial hierarchy. 'Italians' are just vaguely conceptualised by their culture, language and virtues. Such a predominant cultural racial perception is accompanied by certain elements of the Mediterraneanist theory. For example, the narrative of pre-history in all textbook editions entirely focuses on the Mediterranean or the Italian peninsula; there is no mention of peoples beyond the Alps, nor of the Aryans. Even the word, 'Aryans' does not appear in any edition of the book. This is clearly favourable to Mediterraneanism although there is no explanation of how various peoples in the Mediterranean are related to the Italian ethnic origins and all paragraphs on archaic civilisations outside Italy are removed in the 1940s' edition. Equally, it is hard to see Nordicism ideas in the Roman history of the textbook. Some outspoken Nordicism and biological racists in Fascist Italy appropriated Roman history in the course of their arguments. They arbitrarily interpreted imperial Rome at its peak as a society ruled by a strict ethnic hierarchy and a rigid notion of racial purity. Unsurprisingly, they also asserted that the Roman Empire declined because it gradually abandoned principles of ethnic hierarchy and purity by allowing miscegenation and by granting citizenship to non-Aryan races, which caused the degeneration of the Romans.<sup>63</sup> Neither similar comment of this nor any condemnation of Jews can be found in the textbook's Roman history.<sup>64</sup>

A predominance of cultural spiritual racism and some Mediterraneanist ideas, however, does not mean that the Fascist schoolbook is completely immune from Nordicism. By carefully

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<sup>61</sup> De Francesco, *The Antiquity*, pp. 181-215 (especially pp. 197-200); Gillette, *Racial Theories*, pp. 69-78, 94.

<sup>62</sup> De Francesco, *The Antiquity*, pp. 181-215; Gillette, *Racial Theories*, pp. 130-53, 176-80.

<sup>63</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 136-40.

<sup>64</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 99-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp.131-92.



examining the textbook, we can unearth hints of the Nordicist influence in changes made between the editions. The most noticeable one is the selection of racial jargon. Among the terms used to imply ethnicity, Nordicists prefer to use '*razza*' because of its more biological inclination. Cultural spiritual racism and Mediterraneanism are instead inclined to use '*stirpe*'.<sup>65</sup> In the 1930s' textbook, the word of '*razza*' is never cited and the '*stirpe*' is the only term used to indicate ethnicity. The 1940s' edition is exactly the opposite. The former is exclusively used and the latter almost disappears.<sup>66</sup>

Another recognisable change is found in the description of the end of Ancient Rome. The 1930s' book discusses in detail why the Roman Empire eventually collapsed; in the two-page paragraph titled '*Grandezza e Decadenza dell'Impero*' (Greatness and Decadence of the Empire), it points out the loss of traditional Roman virtues (due to pursuit of luxury and pleasure, greedy for money, and the desertion of military duty) as the main culprits of the Empire's decline.<sup>67</sup> Strangely, the 1940s' text hardly mentions this point; this book avoids explaining the cause of the Roman Empire's fall in detail and only briefly hints decadent phenomena of the Roman society. Instead, it assigns the majority of pages (3 out of 4) on the late imperial era to the Christian Church, which, according to this edition's narrative, seamlessly took over the Roman leadership.<sup>68</sup> Behind this change, there is an impact of Nordicism. Although Nordicists or biological racists asserted the existence of Roman's vigorous racial consciousness, historical evidence was far from favourable to them. Historically, Roman society had neither the idea of ethnic hierarchy nor systematic racial discrimination.<sup>69</sup> So, they either strongly condemned racial assimilation as degeneration (and betrayal of *Romanità*), or glossed over the issue. Those who sought the latter, especially, tended to avoid dealing with the collapse of the Empire and instead emphasised Christianity's succession of *Romanità*.<sup>70</sup> This is what is encompassed in the 1940s' textbook.

The last mark of Nordicism is that the later edition of the text becomes less hostile to Germans. Nordicists were pro-German and, as such, their historical discourses were sympathetic to German tribes' invasion of the Roman border. Some even argued that the invasion and influx of

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<sup>65</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p. 135.

<sup>66</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 99-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp.131-92.

<sup>67</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 142-43.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* and *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 189-92.

<sup>69</sup> Giardina, *Il mito di Roma*, pp. 263-67.

<sup>70</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 138-39.

Germans reinvigorated the Roman 'blood' and spirit.<sup>71</sup> In accordance with Fascist Italy's alliance with the Nazis, the 1940s' book partially embraces Nordicism's pro-German stance and tones down antagonistic expressions towards the ancient Germanic tribes. For instance, the frequency of a scornful word 'barbarians' or 'primitive', which mostly indicates Germanic peoples in the narration, diminished from 53 to 18 times (0.57 to 0.27/p) in the later edition.<sup>72</sup>

To conclude, in discourses of Roman history, Fascism brought two ideas into the centre stage; the civilising force of Roman imperialism and racial questions (ethnic origins or homogeneity of Romans, racial consciousness, miscegenation, Jews in Roman world and so on). This was not only for propaganda purposes but also to forging a new Italian identity. Yet the application of these ideas in history education was far from consistent or coherent. As we have seen in the textbook narration, there are certain elements of consistency such as 'unity-division' dichotomy, identification of specific moral values with *Romanità* or *Italianità*, and constant stress on Rome as the civiliser of the world. Nevertheless, we can clearly see ambivalence, vagueness and complicated mixture of contradictory arguments in the text as well; tension between historical continuity and discontinuity in the narrative structure, and the textbook's indecisive or evasive stance in racial issues are good examples. The textbook's treatment of more troublesome, from the Fascist point of view, historical periods (from medieval times to the pre-Risorgimento), will expose this complexity more as the next part will clarify.

### **Between 476 and the 17<sup>th</sup> century: dilemmas of *Romanità* and Italian greatness**

Historical periods after the Roman Empire are poorly organised in the Fascist textbooks. The problem is division of historical periods between each grade's books. In the 1930s' edition, the division is simple and clear-cut: *Libro III classe* – from the Risorgimento to Fascism, *IV classe* – ancient history, *V classe* – from the Middle Ages to the contemporary. The composition of the 1940s' edition is rather messy and confusing. The third grader's book is the same as the previous edition. Yet the fourth grade book covers from antiquity to the discovery of America in 1492, and the fifth grader starts from the expansion of geographical knowledge in the thirteenth century. Hence, it repeats nearly three hundred years including stories of Italian travellers and

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<sup>71</sup> The most typical examples are Giulio Cogni and Giuseppe Pensabene. On their argument of the 'purifying' German invasion, refer to Gillette, *The Racial Theories*, pp. 62, 81

<sup>72</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 99-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 131-92.

navigators. Also, the periodisation in each edition of *Libro V classe* is problematic. While the 1930s' version places '*Il Risorgimento*' at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the later edition does not make the starting point of the national movement clear.<sup>73</sup> Thus, for convenience of the analysis, this part of the thesis will examine the periods between ancient history and the prelude of the Risorgimento, which is, in the textbooks, from the Middle Ages roughly to the early eighteenth century.

After the fall of Roman Empire, the Fascist schoolbook had to deal with two challenging questions: how to explain continuity of *Romanità* and its succession to *Italianità*; how to demonstrate the greatness of Italian nation despite the loss of military domination, lack of political unity and independence, and subordination to foreign powers. Quantitative data of keywords used in the accounts of the concerned historical periods will again help to clarify the textbook's solution to these questions by exposing its main thematic concerns, messages and tropes.

#### 1. Quantitative analysis of terminology in textbook narration

In ancient history, the Fascist textbook's narrative focus is unitary; Rome or *Romanità*. In medieval and pre-modern history, things are not so simple. The textbook's narrative focus in these historical periods can roughly be categorised into two; the Church and the greatness of individual Italians (persons, groups and communes or city-states).

Arguably, the most often used terms in medieval and the pre-Risorgimento history are words related to the Church, such as *Chiesa* (Church), *Cattolico* (Catholic), *Papa* (Pope), *Dio* (God), and *Gesù* (Jesus), which in total emerge 84 times in 50 pages of the 1930s' edition (1.68 p/p) and 68 times in 66 pages of the 1940s' text (1.03 p/p).<sup>74</sup> By placing the Pope or the Holy See at the centre of the narrative in (largely) medieval history, the textbooks (all editions) attempt to demonstrate that the Church substituted for the Roman Empire and therefore Catholicism succeeded *Romanità*. According to the textbooks, the Church was a legitimate successor to the Roman Empire not because its core values were discipline and power but because it saved and preserved the Roman civilisation and people from barbarians' destruction. Indeed, we can see the notably increasing usage of the words, like *difendere* (to defend) / *difensore* (defender) or

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<sup>73</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 136; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 140. I will come back to discuss the textbook's periodisation of the Risorgimento in later part of this chapter.

<sup>74</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

*salvare* (to save), in the 1930s' book: in the ancient history part, these words appear just 14 times (0.15 p/p), whereas they are mentioned 24 times (0.48 p/p) in the periods between the Middle Ages and the pre-French Revolution.<sup>75</sup>

This does not mean that the textbook's history of these times does not emphasise the importance of discipline and power. Although the frequency is reduced compared to the ancient history section, the languages related to discipline (*disciplina, ordine-disordine, o/ubbedire, gerarchia, autorità, legge*) or power (*potenza, forza, potente*) are still important keywords in these historical periods. The words of discipline emerge 19 times (0.38 p/p) in the 1930s' text and 29 times (0.44 p/p) in the 1940s'; the words of power are cited 24 times in both editions (0.48 and 0.36 p/p).<sup>76</sup> However, unlike the Roman history part, the contexts in which these vocabularies appear are not coherent. For instance, the Church's (or Pope's) power in the textbook's medieval history is not associated with military prowess. So the 1940s' *Libro IV classe* says that "Rome no longer **rules** with arms" but with "the Church's work" to "preach a new civilisation to all" and therefore "the Popes' voice became **powerful**".<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, in the account of the Italian maritime republics, 'power' means military strength as it does in the history of Ancient Rome.<sup>78</sup> The usage of languages relating to discipline is also inconsistent. When the text narrates struggles against foreign enemies or political conflicts between Italians, these words are used in the contexts of the unity-division dichotomy. Nonetheless, it is also true that the languages of discipline often imply authority (usually related to the Church) rather than unity as we have seen in a phrase of the 1940s' *Libro IV classe* above ('commended').

Such inconsistency results from the textbook's dual narrative focus. There is more evidence in the quantitative analysis of keywords to show that this dual focus affects the connotation, context, and usage of vocabularies. First of all, in the account of these historical periods, the indispensable connection between the words of domination and the ones of conquest / territorial expansion is no longer apparent. Although the words of domination (*dominazione, superiorità,*

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<sup>75</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59-151; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140.

<sup>76</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>77</sup> "Roma non comanda più con le armi, ma da Roma, per opera [...] della Chiesa, si diffonde sempre più una voce, che predica a tutti una civiltà nuova."; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 196. "E la voce dei Papi diviene potente [...]"; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 193.

<sup>78</sup> "In tal modo essi [Venetians] riuscirono [...] a possedere una potente flotta ed a conquistare vasti dominii in Oriente."; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), p. 115.

*padrona*) are cited more than in the ancient history part,<sup>79</sup> terms of conquest (*conquistare, acquistare*) and territorial expansion (*espansione, colonia*) drastically diminish in the account of these periods.<sup>80</sup> The reason, of course, is that Italy neither possessed vast territories nor conquered new lands. Rather the nation, if we can call medieval Italy a nation, fell victim to foreign invasions and political struggles between European hegemonic powers. Thus, in these periods, the subjects of words relating to domination are not Italians but foreign invaders or rulers (the Goths, the Holy Roman Emperors etc.). In other cases, these words signify the Pope's spiritual and moral superiority over secular monarchs.

Military terms are affected as well. Like in Roman history, the textbooks tell innumerable war stories and war heroes. As a result, words related to war (*battaglia, litigare, combattimento*), army (*armi, esercito, truppa*), and military values (*valore, coraggioso, tenace*) are used as often as they are in the ancient history part: in total, 109 times in the 1930s' edition and 150 times in the 1940s', which is equivalent to 2.18 and 2.27 times per page.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the difference is the subject of military values. Unlike ancient history, words such as courage and audacity are attributed to not only warriors and combatants but also great Italian travellers and sailors.<sup>82</sup>

Another example is the emergence of certain terms which are hardly used in the ancient history section. In the age of political subordination and division, Italians' love of freedom, autonomous spirit and the economic or cultural development of their societies are emphasised as signs of the nation's ongoing greatness. The words related to liberty (*libertà, liberare*), independence (*indipendenza*), and progress (*progresso, sviluppo*) are barely seen in the ancient history part: '*libertà*' or '*liberare* (to liberate)' is only mentioned 4 (0.04 p/p) and 9 times (0.13 p/p) in each edition; '*indipendenza*' seldom appears (twice and once in each edition equivalent to 0.02 and 0.01 p/p); '*progresso*' appears 5 times (0.05 p/p) in the 1930s' text and just twice (0.03 p/p) in the 1940s'.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, the appearance of these words increases in the medieval and pre-Risorgimento history: '*libertà*' is cited 12 (0.24 p/p) and 16 times (0.24 p/p) each;

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<sup>79</sup> In the 1930's edition, they are used 42 times (0.84 p/p) in aggregate. The number drops to 25 times (0.38 p/p) in the 1940s' book but this rate is still higher than in the ancient history part (0.11 and 0.33 p/p); *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 119.

<sup>83</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 126-92.

'*indipendenza*' is used 10 (0.2 p/p) and 5 times (0.07 p/p); '*progresso*' or '*sviluppo* (development)' is seen 12 times (0.24 p/p) in the 1930s' book and 11 times (0.17 p/p) in the 1940s' edition.<sup>84</sup>

While these figures do not represent a high frequency, they may appear regularly enough for the reader to sense the increase use of such words. After all, the point is that the Fascist school textbook highlights some new values, which are hardly seen in the Roman history part, in medieval and pre-modern ages in order to underline the continual existence of the nation's greatness.

It is not only the textbook's dual narrative focus that we can ascertain from the quantitative analysis of keywords. We can also detect the authors' obvious intention to stress Italy's historical continuity. Another aim of the textbook's dual narrative focus is to explain the continual existence of Italy and Italianness to children despite the absence of a unitary nation-state in the peninsula. However, the authors might sense that it was insufficient to argue that the existence of *Italianità* was due to the Church's inheritance of *Romanità* or the greatness of Italian characters. As such, they also used more words like 'Italian', 'Italy', and the 'nation'. In the medieval and pre-Risorgimento history part, '*Italia*' or '*Italiani*' is used 126 (1930s') and 84 (1940's) times, and '*la nazione*' appears 10 (1930s') and 3 (1940s') times. In the case of '*la nazione*', the frequency is very low but nevertheless certainly noticeable given that this phrase is never used in the ancient history account.<sup>85</sup> Historian Ilaria Porciani and Mauro Moretti argued that in the culture of the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy, there was a tendency to seek the nation's origins in the Middle Ages not only its Roman past.<sup>86</sup> Fascism also continued this tradition. Yet the Fascist school textbook neither pinpoints the ethnic formation of Italians nor discusses any racial issue, and even minimises the use of the term, '*razza*' or '*stirpe*' in medieval

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<sup>84</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>85</sup> '*Italia*' (or '*Italiani*') is used 2.52 (1930s') and 1.27 (1940s') times and '*nazione*' appears 0.2 / 0.04 times per page in the period between 476 and 1789. The former is mentioned 33 (0.37 p/p, 1930s') and 54 times (0.8 p/p, 1940s') in ancient history; *Libro IV classe* (1932), pp. 59-151; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 126-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>86</sup> Porciani, 'Stato e nazione', pp. 424-25; Mauro Moretti and Ilaria Porciani, 'Italy's Various Middle Ages', in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, eds. by Robert J. W. Evans and Guy P. Marchal (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 177-96. For a case study to support this argument at a local level (Bologna), look Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy: From Unification to Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 103-27.

and the pre-Risorgimento history.<sup>87</sup> Rather it underlines the nation's continuity, coherence, and the greatness, particularly in morality, heroism, language and cultural achievements, because the regime's ultimate aim was to give a plausible explanation to the existence of Italianness and its ideological or spiritual succession, i.e., the lineage of *Romanità-Italianità*-Risorgimento-Fascism.

In short, when coping with the complicated task of legitimising Italy's existence without the nation-state, the Fascist school textbooks use keywords in more complex contexts and inconsistent ways in the medieval and pre-modern historiography than they do in ancient history. To understand better how this issue affected the textbook's narrative and its implications, we first need to know how Fascism's preceding epochs handled the same dilemma, that is, the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy's perception of the medieval and Renaissance history along with its influence on the Fascist historiography.

## 2. Interpretations and use of the Middle Ages and Renaissance from the Risorgimento to Fascism

The image of the Middle Ages was at first absolutely negative. Centuries between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the dawn of the Renaissance in Europe were considered as the epoch of barbarism, destruction, terrifying diseases, poverty, decline of civilisation, and religious dogmatism. This idea of the Middle Ages as the 'Dark era' was formed by humanist intellectuals in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, who idealised classical antiquity as a model of human civilisation, and criticised feudalism and the Catholic Church of their despotic rule or ideological dogmatism.<sup>88</sup> However, such a negative conception of the medieval world was challenged after the French Revolution. With the advent of Romanticism and cultural nationalism, the trend to glamorise the nation's past and to discover the nation's origins in history came into vogue. In this sense, the Middle Ages became a particularly popular subject and source of inspiration as the nationalist zeal sought not only universality in the Greek-Roman classicism but the individual nation's distinctiveness. From the nineteenth century onwards, therefore, medieval Europe was depicted as the world of romantic chivalry, loyalty, brave knights, virtuous kings, pious saints,

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<sup>87</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-234; *Libro V classe* (1932/37), pp. 91-140; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>88</sup> Giuseppe Sergi, *L'idea di medioevo. Fra storia e senso commune*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Rome: Donzelli, 2005), pp. 31-32.

and sacrificial national heroes in numerous novels, epic poems, operas, paintings, architecture, and even historical research.<sup>89</sup>

Italy was not an exception in this European phenomenon. In the age of the Risorgimento, many leading figures of Italian culture, such as D'Azeglio, Hayez, Verdi, and Alessandro Manzoni, were inspired by medieval historical episodes and produced many works which reflected the nationalistic fervour for independence and unification in the setting of the Middle Ages.<sup>90</sup> In addition, politicians, intellectuals and historians in the first half of the nineteenth century and before the Unification often discussed medieval history to identify the persistence of Italian nationhood even in the midst of division, foreign invasions, and subordination: these included

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<sup>89</sup> Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, "'Medieval' Identities in Italy: National, Regional, Local', in *Manufacturing Middle Ages: Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. by Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 319–45; Simonetta Soldani, 'Il Medioevo del Risorgimento nello specchio della nazione', in *Arti e storia nel Medioevo vol. 4: Il Medioevo al passato e al presente*, eds. by Enrico Castelnuovo and Giuseppe Sergi (Turin: Einaudi, 2004), pp. 149–86. For a more detailed discussion about the relationship between Romanticism and popular images of the Middle Ages in nineteenth-century Europe and Italy, see Renato Bordone, 'Il medioevo nell'immaginario dell'Ottocento italiano', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medioevo*, 100, (1997), 109–49 (especially, pp. 117–30); Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), pp. 113–26.

<sup>90</sup> Bordone, 'Il medioevo nell'immaginario'; Di Carpegna Falconieri, "'Medieval' Identities', pp. 321–22; Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, pp. 96–98; Pierangelo Schiera, 'Sviluppo delle scienze sociali e studio del medioevo nell'Ottocento', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medioevo*, 100, (1997), 65–107. For D'Azeglio, Hayez, Verdi, Manzoni and others' exemplary works, refer to these: Lyttelton, 'Creating a National'; Alberto Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento: Parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Turin: Einaudi, 2006), p. 45; Alberto Mario Banti, 'Le invasioni barbariche e le origini delle nazioni', in *Immagini della nazione nell'Italia del Risorgimento*, eds. by him and Roberto Bizzocchi (Rome: Carocci, 2002), pp. 21–44 (for Manzoni); Carlotta Sorba, 'Il Risorgimento in musica: l'opera lirica nei teatri del 1848', in *Immagini della nazione*, pp. 133–56 (for Rossini and Verdi); Fernando Mazzocca, *Hayez dal mito al bacio* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998); Ian Wood, 'Adelchi and Attila: the barbarians and the Risorgimento', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 76 (November 2008), 233–55 (for Manzoni and Verdi); this thesis's note no. 46 in chapter III. Also an excellent monograph on medieval history in the Risorgimento just came out while this thesis being finalised; Duccio Balestracci, *Medioevo e Risorgimento: L'invenzione dell'identità italiana nell'Ottocento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015).



Manzoni, Cesare Balbo, Carlo Troya, Carlo Cattaneo, and Michele Amari.<sup>91</sup> Their historical discussions helped to ignite academic or public interest in three aspects of Italy's medieval past: the Catholic Church's role, the barbarian (especially the Lombards) invasions and their aftermath, and the Italian city-states or communes.

To simplify, pro-Catholic liberals or neo-Guelphs, i.e., Manzoni, Balbo, and Troya, were proponents of the idea that the Pope was the protector of the Roman civilisation from barbarian destruction in the early Middle Ages and therefore the Church functioned as a crucial intermediary role between *Romanità* and *Italianità*. Inevitably, they tended to emphasise the distinction between the barbarian invaders and the indigenous Romanised population. As such, their thesis highlighted strict ethnic segregation between the conqueror (barbarians) and the conquered (Romans). No matter how historically correct it was, this idea served as a strong parallel metaphor for the 'oppressive' Austrians and the 'oppressed' Italians in the Risorgimento.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, anti-clerical republicans or liberals like Cattaneo and Amari, pioneered the re-consideration of medieval Italian communes. Inspired by contemporary Francophone historians Thierry, Michelet, François Guizot, and Simonde de Sismondi, they drew attention to various signs of economic, social, juridical, and military progress of medieval towns in Italy, and hailed their autonomous administration and politics as the nation's tradition of liberty.<sup>93</sup>

It was the neo-Guelph's discussion of the Middle Ages that prevailed in Italy before the Unification as it resonated with the nation's political climate at that time. After 1861, however, the discursive focus rapidly shifted into the development of city-states or communes in accordance with the need to promote civic national identity in the newly unified nation-state. Also, the Pope's impeding actions in the course of the Unification and the ongoing antagonistic

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<sup>91</sup> The following studies summarise Manzoni, Balbo, Troya, Cattaneo and Amari's interpretations of medieval history: Balestracci, *Medioevo e Risorgimento*; Banti, 'Le invasioni barbariche'; Di Carpegna Falconieri, '"Medieval" Identities'; Moretti and Porciani, 'Italy's Various Middle Ages'; Schiera, 'Sviluppo delle scienze'; Wood, 'Adelchi and Attila'.

<sup>92</sup> Di Carpegna Falconieri, '"Medieval" Identities', pp. 325–26; Wood, 'Adelchi and Attila'.

<sup>93</sup> Moretti and Porciani, 'Italy's Various Middle Ages', pp. 185–87; Soldani, 'Il Medioevo del Risorgimento'. Soldani's this article is one of the best works on the image and use of medieval history in the Ottocento Italy. Meanwhile, on the historical/political interpretations of medieval communes in modern Italy, Vallerani provides a good essay in the same book. See Massimo Vallerani, 'Il comune come mito politico. Immagini e modelli tra Otto e Novecento', in *Arti e storia vol.4*, pp. 187–206.

relationship between the Vatican and the Kingdom after 1861 or 1870 caused the decline of interest in the Church's historical contribution during the Middle Ages. Meanwhile, despite its relatively ascending popularity, the historical discourse on medieval communes also had serious limitations. First, was the identity conflict between the local and the national: did the citizen's identity belong to the city-state or the nation? Was there no danger of encouraging the revival of regional separatism by emphasising autonomous tradition of medieval city-states? Another problem was the historical fact that there was no significant development of an independent city-state in the Southern Italy. Thus, for the Southerners it was neither appealing nor effective to present medieval communes' autonomy or independence as the nation's common civil tradition. As a consequence, in Liberal Italy, it was Ancient Rome and Risorgimento heroes which dominated historical themes in nationwide public ceremonies, monuments, events and the central government's propaganda. The medieval period was still conceived as a necessary historical path for the eventual formation of the unified state but its consumption in Liberal Italy was relegated to local and private levels. Aside from a few historical episodes or myths which had already been diffused nationwide and established as icons of the Italian nationhood before the Unification, medieval themes were largely consumed as catalysts of local pride and community spirits or just became a source of popular medieval fantasies.<sup>94</sup>

So far, we have seen the image and use of medieval history. How then was the perception of the Renaissance and subsequent centuries in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy?

Although Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance, it is ironically tricky to apply the term 'Renaissance' as a historical period to Italian history. Since Jacob Burckhardt's book, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), there was possibly no serious polemic among scholars to roughly periodise the Renaissance from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries in the disciplines of art history, architectural history, and literature studies.<sup>95</sup> Yet in political and social history, things are far more complicated. Apart from the fact that the exact timing and character

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<sup>94</sup> Di Carpegna Falconieri, "'Medieval' Identities', pp. 324-45.

<sup>95</sup> Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, pp. 19-20, 24. Although the usefulness of the term and notion of 'Renaissance' has begun to be questioned since the twentieth century, it is no problem to assume the general conformity until the end of nineteenth or the early twentieth century. On the troubled concept of Renaissance and challenges against it, see Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical*, pp. 290-385; Yannick Portebois and Nicholas Terpstra, 'Introduction, Nineteenth Century Renaissance: Ideology to Commodity' in *The Renaissance in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. by them (Toronto: CRRS, University of Toronto, 2003), pp. 1-10.

of the phenomenon which '(re)discovered' the human varied across European countries,<sup>96</sup> the term 'Renaissance' could be seen as misleading or inappropriate from the Italian nationalist point of view. This is because French and Spanish armies invaded the peninsula in these centuries, and as a result, many Italian communes or principalities, including the Dukedom of Milan and the Republic of Florence, lost their independence. For Italians, the late fifteenth century and the sixteenth century denoted a period of political degeneration and national humiliation. Therefore, to call such an era 'Renaissance' (rebirth) might not seem plausible, and many historians in Liberal Italy, like Pasquale Villari and Adolfo Venturi, avoided using the term, Renaissance, or its Italian equivalent '*Rinascimento*' to name that historical period. Instead, they preferred not to recognise these centuries as a separate historical era by dividing them between the Middle Ages and modern times with the datum year of 1492 or 1530.<sup>97</sup>

Generally speaking, whether the terminology was directly used or not, and whether it was periodised as a distinctive epoch or not, the perception of the Renaissance in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy was ambivalent: the period was depicted as the age of Italian creativity or genius in culture, and simultaneously regarded as the age of decay in politics and morality which led the nation to the abyss of the 'decadent' seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, to celebrate great Renaissance men of culture was a deep-rooted literary tradition in Italy. Already at the end of the Renaissance, Giorgio Vasari glorified his artist or architect heroes in the famous book, *Lives of the Great Painters, Sculptor, and Architects* (1550/1568), and established the precedent of the cult of individual talent. From then on, many followed in Vasari's steps but it was Ugo Foscolo who first sublimated this cult of individual genius into the idea of Italian greatness in literature. His poem, *Dei sepolcri* (1807) is one of the best known examples. However, Foscolo is noteworthy not only because of his literary creations. He was also one of the first men who elaborated the idea that the moral ineptitude of the Renaissance era brought about Italy's political and social miseries in subsequent centuries.<sup>98</sup> For the same reason, an

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<sup>96</sup> To find out more discussions on the difficulty to generalise the Renaissance in broader European context, see Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical*, pp. 386-97; *The Renaissance in National Context*, eds. by Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), especially, 'Introduction', pp. 1-5 and Peter Burke, 'The uses of Italy', pp. 6-20.

<sup>97</sup> Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>98</sup> For Vasari and his book, see Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical*, pp. 59-67. Foscolo's *Dei sepolcri* and his view of the Renaissance is explained here; Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, pp. 34-37; Sandra

equally important writer in the study of history was Pasquale Villari. He, like Foscolo, shed light on important men in the Renaissance (Savonarola and Machiavelli) but judged the age politically corrupt and attempted to explain how such a culturally supreme nation could be so decayed in politics. His answer was the excessive individualism and the lack of morality.<sup>99</sup> This argument had great impact on historical discourses of the Renaissance in Liberal Italy, and as we have seen, many Fascists such as Giovanni Gentile were hugely influenced by it. In order to understand his influence on Fascism's negative judgement of the Renaissance, we can compare Villari's words with Gentile's:

"But, in the midst of such great splendour, one can see strange and inexplicable contradictions. This people, so rich, industrious, and intelligent, [...] is rapidly **falling into corruption**. [...] The nation becomes **politically and morally** so **weak**, [...]. How then could Italy become in the midst of such a great literary and artistic brilliance weak and degenerate? [...] each **individual** [...] **was ruled by self interest and selfishness**; moral corruption became therefore inevitable."<sup>100</sup>

"In the Renaissance, there is much light [...]. But there is also much darkness. **Because the Renaissance is also the age of individualism**, that through its splendid poetry and art **dragged the Italian nation towards the indifference**, scepticism, and distracted cynicism of those who have nothing to defend. [...] [The Italians

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Parmegiani, 'In Search of a Nation: Renaissance Motifs in Ugo Foscolo's Pre-romantic Historical and Literary Criticism', in *The Renaissance in the Nineteenth*, pp. 143-57.

<sup>99</sup> Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical*, pp. 209-11. Mauro Moretti carried out more detailed and meticulous study of Villari's works on medieval history. See Mauro Moretti, 'L'Italia, la civiltà latina e germanica (1861). Sulle origini degli studi medievistici di Pasquale Villari', in *Italia e Germania. Immagini, modelli, miti fra due popoli nell'Ottocento*, eds. by von Reinhard Elze and Pierangelo Schiera (Bologna-Berlin: Il Mulino, 1988), pp. 299-371.

<sup>100</sup> "Ma in mezzo a così grande splendore si osservano strane ed inesplicabili contraddizioni. Questo popolo tanto ricco, industrioso, intelligente, [...] va corrompendosi rapidamente. [...] La nazione diviene politicamente e moralmente così debole, [...]. come dunque l'Italia, in mezzo a tanto splendore di lettere e di arti, s'indebolisce, si corrompe e decade? [...] l'individuo [...] si trovava dominato solo dall'interesse personale e dall'egoismo; la corruzione dei costumi diveniva quindi inevitabile."; Pasquale Villari, *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi*, 2 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1877-82), vol. 1, pp. 2-3, 10.

of this period] **did not believe in anything beyond** the free and pleasurable play of **their own creative fantasy**. From thence, came the frivolity of a pattern of behaviour both decadent and corrupt."<sup>101</sup>

Yet it is not only the ambivalent judgement of the Renaissance that we can see in the Fascist discourse. Fascism's reconstruction of medieval history inherited many elements from the Risorgimento and Liberal era too. All three principal themes in nineteenth-century historical debates –the Church's role as a defender of the civilisation, the ethnic or socio-cultural relationship between the conqueror barbarians and conquered Romans, and the emphasis on Italian communes' progress and independence– are prominent in numerous Fascist discourses of the Middle Ages.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, Fascist historical narratives of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance added nothing new in their repertory of exemplary episodes; as mentioned, the Fascist version of history repeated almost all stories of the great events and heroic figures in these periods –the Oath of Pontida (1167), the Battle of Legnano, the Sicilian Vespers, Ettore Fieramosca, Francesco Ferrucci etc.–, which had already been 'rediscovered', reconstructed, and mythologized during the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy.<sup>103</sup>

The last evidence of Liberal Italy's legacy in the Fascist history of these periods is the propensity to conflate the Middle Ages with the Renaissance. As Medina Lasansky demonstrated, Fascism deliberately blurred the precise distinction between the medieval and Renaissance in

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<sup>101</sup> "[...] il Rinascimento. Nel quale è tanta luce, [...] ma è pur tanta ombra. Giacché il Rinascimento è pur l'età dell'individualismo, che trasse la nazione italiana attraverso i sogni splendidi della poesia e dell'arte all'indifferenza, allo scetticismo, all'imbelle neghittosità degli uomini che nulla hanno da difendere intorno a sé, [...] perché in nulla credono che trascenda il libero e lieto giuoco della propria fantasia creatrice. Donde la frivolezza d'un costume che viene decadendo e corrompendosi a mano a mano."; G. Gentile, *Che cosa è*, pp. 14–15 (translation in his *Origins and Doctrines*, ed. & trans. by James A. Gregor, p. 44).

<sup>102</sup> The followings are just a few examples of the Fascist discussions; for the praise of the Church's role in the early Middle Ages, Solmi, *Discorsi sulla storia*. On the barbarian invasions and ethnic integrity, see Giulio Cogni, *Il razzismo* (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1937), pp. 216–21. As for the issue of progress in medieval communes, refer to Volpe, *Il Medio Evo*.

<sup>103</sup> On the myth of Pontida, see Piero Brunello, 'Pontida', in *I luoghi della memoria: simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, ed. by Mario Isnenghi (Rome: Laterza, 1997), pp. 16–28. For the cult of Ferrucci and Fieramosca, refer to Alessio Petrizzo, "'The Garibaldi of the sixteenth century". Francesco Ferrucci and the heroes of the Risorgimento', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 18, 2 (2013), 145–56 (Ferrucci); Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, pp. 71–73, 101 (both). For the Battle of Legnano and other cases, see Duggan, *The Force of Destiny*, pp. 96–98 and the footnote no. 90 in this chapter.

public presentations.<sup>104</sup> The regime, which was fond of pomp, grandeur, and heroism, attempted to revive various Renaissance-style festivals or historical re-enactments, many of them were associated with the celebration of a patriotic hero or notable man of culture. Nevertheless, equally obsessed with populist appeal, collectivism, and national pride, Mussolini's regime always claimed these spectacles as 'medieval' traditions, and also fostered collective atmosphere, civic national identity, and the sense of belonging to a glorious nation during the event. In short, the conflation of the Middle Ages and Renaissance was common in Fascist Italy. Since '*Medioevo*' denoted glorious old days of collectivity and the Renaissance signified the exuberance of individual genius in popular conception, the opportunistic regime mingled these images in its political use of history.<sup>105</sup>

It is not only in popular visual culture or cultural creations for the well-educated class where we can detect similarities between Fascism and Liberal Italy in their use of medieval or Renaissance history. History textbooks for primary schoolchildren also provide substantial evidence in this respect. More significantly, the textbooks can show us how inherited elements are weaved together by the Fascist regime in simpler languages. This exposes not only the descended ideas, themes and rhetoric but also Fascism's marks in the narrative, with its own peculiarities and limits. The next part will analyse the textbook accounts in order to demonstrate this.

### 3. The long '*Medioevo*' and subsequent centuries in the Fascist textbooks

One of the main goals of this study is to demonstrate complex origins, motivations, languages, rhetoric, methodologies, and strategies in the Fascist conception and use of history in narrative forms. This hybrid nature of Fascism's historiography is epitomised in the textbook's opening paragraphs on the Middle Ages. The 1930's book begins the section on medieval history with this statement:

"The Middle Ages were considered, until recently, a period of ignorance and profound decadence. To illustrate how wrong this judgement is, it's enough to think that at that time, our beautiful language and unmistakably Italian art reached their full maturity, and that against the Germanic race's predominance, the

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<sup>104</sup> Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, pp. 19-25.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-73. For more discussions on the Fascist revival of popular festivals, see Stefano Cavazza, *Piccole patrie: Feste popolari tra regione e nazione durante il fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997).

Papacy [...], which is the symbol of *Latinità*, or better still *Romanità*, that from Rome teaches the world the immortal truth of faith [...].”<sup>106</sup>

Without doubt, this statement explicitly rejects the idea of the Middle Ages as a retrogressive period of the civilisation and embraces Volpe’s positive assessment of the era. Yet it would be wrong to say that such a judgment derives from the belief in the progress of humanity. Rather, the real intention of this statement, as clearly shown in the paragraph, is to argue the continual existence of the nationhood (*Romanità* and *Italianità*) and its greatness in language, culture, and most of all, in Catholicism. This is not only motivated by an ethno-cultural nationalist attitude, but is also mixed with civic nationalism in its trope, languages and concept of the nation.

Apparently, Fascism’s historical narrative is not a mindless imitation or crude synthesis of existing literary traditions. Mussolini’s regime was certainly willing to inject its own political interests into its presentation of history, even if such a presentation was seemingly a reproduction or repetition of the past practice. The account of the early Middle Ages in the 1940s’ text provides a good example of this. With the title ‘An Empire without Arms’, the four-page account explains how the Catholic Church was able to protect Roman people and culture, and the great contributions it made to civilise barbarians.<sup>107</sup> After all of its discussions, the section ends with this concluding remark:

“And Rome remains, thanks to the work of its great Pontiffs supported by God, the capital of an unarmed empire: this is the second Roman Empire.”<sup>108</sup>

Given that the regime was fond of claiming Fascist Italy as the Third Roman Empire, this section of the text conveyed an undisguised message; ‘Fascism is the historical successor of the

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<sup>106</sup> “Il Medio Evo era considerato fino al qualche tempo fa un periodo di ignoranza e di profonda decadenza. Per convincersi quanto sia errato questo giudizio, basterà pensare che in quel periodo giungono alla piena maturità la nostra dolce lingua e un’arte schiettamente italiana, e che contro il prevalere della razza germanica si solleva [...] il Papato, che, il simbolo di latinità, anzi di romanità, da Roma insegna al mondo le verità immortali della fede [...]”; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), p. 92.

<sup>107</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193–96.

<sup>108</sup> “E Roma rimane ancora, per opera di grandi Pontefici sorretti da Dio, capitale di un impero senz’armi: è questo il secondo Impero di Roma.”; *Ibid.*, p. 196.

two previous Roman (Italian) empires, that is, Ancient Rome and the Papal Rome.' It is true that the ideas of Italy's historical mission to civilise the world and of the Church's contribution to save civilisation from destruction had already been formulated and much debated in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy. What is peculiar in the Fascist use of history was not that Fascism merely repeated these repertoires, but also incorporated them into its own historical arguments (and also political programmes), i.e., Italy's destiny to be an empire and the nation's spiritual genealogy, *Romanità-Italianità*-Fascism. This is even more evident in the textbook's constant comparison between the Church-Popes and the Roman Empire-Emperors. In particular, the 1940s' edition constantly reminds readers of similarities between the two as below:

"And the Popes' voice becomes as powerful as that of ancient Emperors."<sup>109</sup>

"[...] the barbarian king [Totila] had fallen to his knees, like the barbarian kings of the past fell to their knees before Rome's power."<sup>110</sup>

"At the approach of the barbarians, he [Gregory I], like a Roman Emperor, took measures to defend Rome and augmented the militia. [...] Just like the ancient Emperors dispatched the army to distant lands in order to expand the Empire, he sent missionaries to convert the barbarous Angles."<sup>111</sup>

What we should now look into is how this effort was made in the textbook narrative and to what extent it was persuasive.

As demonstrated, one of the primary narrative tactics used in the textbook's ancient history was to focus on favourable historical facts and to avoid discussing anything unfavourable. This pattern continues in the history of Middle Ages and subsequent centuries. Various Germanic tribes and foreign forces -the Ostrogoths, Byzantine Empire, the Lombards, the Arabs, and the Franks- ruled parts of the Italian peninsula and around islands for centuries. So, it is more reasonable to think that these foreign powers somehow influenced the existing Romanised society and its culture. All editions of the textbook, however, are almost mute on this issue.

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<sup>109</sup> "E la voce dei Papi diviene potente come quella degli antichi Imperatori."; Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>110</sup> "[...] il re barbaro era caduto in ginocchio, come i re barbari d'un tempo cadevano in ginocchio di fronte alla forza di Roma."; Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>111</sup> "All'avvicinarsi dei barbari, egli, come se fosse un Imperatore romano, dispose i provvedimenti per la difesa di Roma ed aumentò le milizie. [...] Come gli antichi Imperatori inviavano gli eserciti nelle lontane terre per ingrandire l'Impero, egli inviò missionari sino ai barbari Angli per convertirli."; Ibid., p. 195.



There is no description of Germanic peoples' culture or customs, no comment on the relationship (integration or segregation) between these tribes and the indigenous Roman population, and no explanation of the interaction between the invaders and the Church. Even some important historical figures in these three centuries, like Belisarius, emperor Justinian, and Alboin, are completely absent from the text.<sup>112</sup> Instead, the textbook describes how deeply overwhelmed the barbarian hordes, which only vandalised before, were by the magnificent Roman civilisation and how much eager they became to imitate Roman culture.<sup>113</sup> Hence, this period in the textbook account is reduced to just one episode; Ostrogothic King Theodoric's admiration of *Romanità* (1930s') or Saint Benedict's encounter with Totila in which the barbarian King knelt down to pay homage to the saint (1940s').<sup>114</sup>

Unlike barbarians and Greeks, the Catholic Church is the real protagonist in the textbook's early Middle Ages, especially, Pope Gregory I and Saint Benedict of Nursia's stories. Stories of their immense contributions to save the civilisation and to propagate Christianity occupy nearly half of the textbook's coverage of the three hundred years between the fall of Rome and the emergence of Charlemagne.<sup>115</sup> Yet the Church's centrality in the narrative is not confined to this period. The Church and Pope are often mentioned as equal as Charlemagne in the story of the Holy Roman Empire's foundation. Even in the scene of the Emperor's coronation in Rome in AD 800, the narrator's eyes seem to go towards the Pope rather than Charlemagne himself.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, after this account, the 1930s' text moves on to explain not the Frankish Empire but the Papal State. This section is absolutely favourable to the Church. It advocates the Pope's possession of vast territories in central-northern Italy, and never mentions the Church's misdeeds in its governance.<sup>117</sup> Although the Holy Roman Empire reappears in the following part, the narrative focuses on the establishment of feudalism, not the Empire. So in the text, the

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<sup>112</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 91-96; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-96.

<sup>113</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 92-93.

<sup>114</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), p. 93; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 194. Totila, an Ostrogothic King, is erroneously mentioned as 'Lombard' King in the 1940's book.

<sup>115</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 91-96; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-98. Both editions devote almost three pages out of the six to the two men.

<sup>116</sup> "il Pontefice impose solennemente sul capo a Carlo Magno la corona d'imperatore. [...] Pareva che dovesse rinascere l'antico Impero, riconsacrato dalle sante mani del Pontefice."; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), p. 96.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

Empire is dismissed as a nominal existence which was “a shapeless group of many large and small states” in which “the emperor and the king’s authority was reduced to little or nothing.”<sup>118</sup>

The Fascist schoolbook’s favourable narrative to the Church culminates decisively in the Investiture Controversy. The textbook blames the Emperors entirely for the cause of the conflict because some Emperors appointed unworthy persons to ecclesiastic posts “only in order to secure their fidelity and service.” This, according to the text, “caused the corruption of clerics and weakened the Church’s power.” The Pope’s response against it, in this regard, is justified as a rightful defensive action.<sup>119</sup> More importantly, this section on the Investiture Controversy, with all the other narrative devices used in the previous pages –the minimal treatment of the barbarian kingdoms and Byzantine, an utterly favourable assessment of the Church, and some deliberate omissions or biased judgments of historical facts– exposes the author’s ultimate intention: to claim the Church as an embodiment of the Italian identity against foreign nations and to connect Catholicism with *Romanità* and *Italianità*. It is well summarised in the section’s concluding remark:

“In addition, the Investiture Controversy [...] for Italians appeared to be a revival of ancient Rome’s power against the coarse foreign barbarity, [and] as a comforting sign to show that the national sentiment was still alive.”<sup>120</sup>

Suddenly, however, the narrative focus shifts away from the Church after the story of the Crusades. With the emergence of a paragraph titled, ‘The Commune’, the textbook celebrates not only socio-economic developments but also political, juridical and administrative autonomy in Italian communes; commercial prosperity, population growth, the rise of bourgeoisie classes,

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<sup>118</sup> “il Sacro Romano Impero e i regni che ne facevano parte erano in realtà solo un informe aggregato di altrettanti Stati grandi e piccoli [...]”, “L’autorità dell’imperatore e dei re si riduceva dunque a ben poco o a nulla [...]”; Ibid., pp. 100–1 (quotations in p. 101). Also the 1940s’ edition has the same low opinion of the Frankish Empire. For instance, its concluding remark in the paragraph of Holy Roman Empire (titled, “A false dream: Empire without Rome”) is, “Come può ritornare il Romano Impero se Roma non è più la capitale?”; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 199.

<sup>119</sup> “Ora accadeva che spesso venivano concesse investiture ecclesiastiche dall’Imperatore a persone poco degne, solo per assicurarsi della loro fedeltà e dei loro servigi.”, “In tal modo [...] si favoriva la corruzione degli ecclesiastici e [...] si indeboliva sempre più la Potenza della Chiesa.”; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 105.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 107. For the original Italian text, see the footnote no.63 in chapter III of this thesis.

abolishment of the feudal system, the guild, autonomous governments and independent magistrates of city-states (*i Consoli or il Podestà*), and their own statute, law and army etc.<sup>121</sup> From then on, the Church's presence in the text fades away towards the end of medieval periods. Although it is still occasionally mentioned, the Church or Papacy is no longer the central protagonist in the narrative. For example, in the story of Frederick I Barbarossa and the Battle of Legnano, the protagonist of the account is the Lombard League, more likely Milan. Pope Alexander III is cited only once ("joined to the League") in a short sentence.<sup>122</sup> Oddly enough, the book even recounts that the conflict between Guelphs and Ghibellines, centred on Frederick II and his successors, not the Popes.<sup>123</sup> Instead, the greatness of the Italian nation -its spirit of freedom, highly civilised culture, love of *Patria*, creativity, and bravery- takes centre stage in the narrative of the late Middle Ages and following centuries.

Such a shift of the focus is another example of Fascism's selective use of history. During the Avignon Papacy (1309~1377) and the Western Schism (1378~1418), the Pope's authority and power weakened, and the Church's leadership was divided for long periods. As such, the Church was no longer, for the textbook author, a suitable political entity to represent Italian greatness and *Italianità*. Consequently, by evading this undesirable topic, the textbook chose to underline other historical facts which illustrated the continuous progress of *Italianità* more adequately.<sup>124</sup>

In fact, we can clearly see this alteration of the narrative focus and selective use of historical facts in the 1940s' text. There is no account of the Investiture Controversy and Humiliation of Canossa. After describing Charlemagne and feudalism, the 1940s' edition moves straight to the account of Italian maritime republics which is much longer and more detailed than in the previous edition. Even the Crusades story is encompassed in this part as a great achievement or enterprise of these Italian sea powers.<sup>125</sup> Also, there is no specific section on the birth of communes. Alternatively, a four-page section, entitled '*L'Impero del Lavoro* (The Empire of

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<sup>121</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 108-11.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111-13; the quotation in p. 112; "Alla lega aderì anche il pontefice Alessandro III [...]". The reference to the Pope in the 1940s' version is even shorter; "i Comuni d'Italia, appoggiati dal Papa, si erano uniti in lega [...]"; *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 213.

<sup>123</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 114-16.

<sup>124</sup> The Avignon Papacy and Western Schism are not properly elucidated in all editions. They are only briefly mentioned in the episodes of Cola di Rienzo (1930s') and of Saint Catherine of Siena (1940s') as a background story; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 119-20 and *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 222-23.

<sup>125</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 201-4.

Labour)', expounds advanced commerce and agriculture, prosperous industries, highly skilled craftsmanship, exquisite art and beautiful architectures in Italian communes.<sup>126</sup> Likewise, Italian mercenary captains, or *condottieri*, are described as more proof of the great *Italianità*. Their business of warmongering, kidnapping, intimidation, extortion, and destruction for money is entirely absent in the text. The book only hails their valour, excellent fighting skills, adventurousness, and extraordinary leadership.<sup>127</sup>

The new narrative focus to glorify Italian greatness, however, provides an advantage. It makes it easier to integrate the Renaissance into the discourse of *Romanità-Italianità*-Risorgimento. By defining it as the climax of the cultural development in medieval Italy, the textbook claimed the Renaissance as the antecedent or precondition of the nation's political unity. Besides, the reinvigorated spirit of *Romanità / Italianità* in the Renaissance again, according to the text, guided other nations towards progress as the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church had done:

"[...] in his *Divine Comedy*, [Dante] consecrated our language, [...] prepared and anticipated the nation's political unity by centuries. Finally, it began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and reached full development in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, that great artistic and literary movement began [...], known as the Renaissance. The spirit of the Roman world was reborn and it echoed the glory of Roman civilisation [...]. Our Fartherland was at the centre of this movement [...], which once again became the teacher of wisdom to other nations."<sup>128</sup>

It might not be surprising that Fascism extolled the virtues of Renaissance art and culture. Yet it would be something unexpected that if the textbooks do not describe lives and works of

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 205–8. This section says nothing about socio-political developments (the rise of bourgeoisie, achievements of political, administrative and judicial autonomy etc.) in city-states. This once more indicates that the Fascist textbook's main concern in medieval history is to glorify *Italianità* rather than to prove progress of humanity.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 223–26. These pages contain the biography of a *condottiere*, Muzio Attendolo Sforza, which is almost as long as the story of Pope Gregory I. The same edition of fifth grader's book too, contains a biography of another *condottiere*, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere; see *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 130–31.

<sup>128</sup> "[...] nella sua *Divina Commedia* consacrò la nostra lingua, [...] preparò e precorse di secoli il compiersi dell'unità politica nazionale. Nel secolo XIV infine s'iniziò, e raggiunse il pieno sviluppo nel secolo XV, quell grande movimento artistico e letterario, [...] che va sotto il nome di *Rinascimento*. Rinacque l'anima del mondo romano, e si richiamò [...] la gloria della civiltà romana. [...] Centro di questo movimento, [...] fu la nostra Patria, che ancora una volta fu maestra di sapienza alle altre nazioni."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 123.

individual Renaissance masters. The Renaissance men of culture mentioned in the 1930s' text are as follows: Dante, Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Raphael, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Ludovico Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Francesco Guicciardini. All other great painters, sculptors, architects and writers in the Renaissance are completely missing in the text.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the book neither mentions nor shows (in photos) famous works of these nine men, except Dante, Ariosto and Raphael. There is no biographic story of them.<sup>130</sup> Only the later edition deals with Dante's and Da Vinci's life stories.<sup>131</sup> However, the treatment of the Renaissance in the 1940s' text is more radical and rather shocking. The book omits the Renaissance section entirely and eliminates all references to Renaissance men and their works except for Dante and Da Vinci. Even the word '*Rinascimento*' is not cited at all in the whole book. Instead, a few artistic and architectural masterpieces of the Renaissance are presented in the form of illustrations which are scattered in the pages on medieval history.<sup>132</sup>

What does this mean? Certainly, this treatment is an outcome of the Fascist tendency to conflate '*rinascimentale*' with '*medievale*'. Both editions of the textbook do not consider the Renaissance as a separate historical period. The Renaissance section in the 1930s' edition is not an independent chapter but a short subchapter (one page and a half) in the long "*Medio Evo*" part.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, most of the Renaissance men mentioned above (Raphael, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Guicciardini) do not feature in this subchapter. Their names or works are found in the section on "Italian Culture and Art in the Sixteenth Century" which is a subchapter of the "*Evo Moderno* (Modern Era)" chapter.<sup>134</sup> The 1940s' edition is more extreme: there is no use of the term Renaissance and no definition of the phenomenon. The

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-24, 131-32.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.; Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Ariosto's *I'Orlando Furioso*, and Raphael's paintings in the Vatican Palace are the only exceptions.

<sup>131</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 218-20; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 124-25.

<sup>132</sup> Giotto's bell tower of Santa Maria del Fiore (Florence), Brunelleschi's dome in the same cathedral, and Michelangelo's dome of the Saint Peter's (Rome) are shown as illustrations without further information; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 219 and 227.

<sup>133</sup> The subchapter's title ("*Le lettere e le arti- Il Rinascimento*") subtly implies this intention as well; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 122-24.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-32.

textbook also indicates the year 1492 (the discovery of America) as the start of the modern era; a common alternative when one ignores the Renaissance as a separate historical era.<sup>135</sup>

The amalgamation of the Renaissance with the Middle Ages (or partially the modern era), however, is not the only reason for this treatment. In the textbook's treatment of the Renaissance, the author tends to emphasise other traits or virtues in *Italianità* beyond artistic and cultural brilliance: those traits are patriotism, military virtues (bravery, tenacity, perseverance), and scientific or technological genius. While the Renaissance art and culture barely covers four pages, political history and stories of patriotic heroes, *condottieri*, scientific inventions and geographical discoveries occupy the eleven pages from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century in the 1930s' text.<sup>136</sup> The coverage of historical figures in the textbooks exposes such an intention, as well. For example, in the account of inventions and geographic discoveries, both editions of the schoolbook mention relatively minor historical figures like Panfilo Castaldi (1940s') and Aldo Manuzio (both) in order to claim Italian contributions to the birth of modern printing technology.<sup>137</sup> The textbooks also devote several pages to Marco Polo, Columbus, Vespucci, and other navigators.<sup>138</sup> Given the minimal presence or complete absence of many famous Renaissance artists and writers, one may assume the author's purpose; to underline Italians' scientific ability, adventurous spirit and bravery. Biographical stories of Dante and Da Vinci in the 1940s' book too are designed to deliver the same message. Dante's story, as explained in the previous chapter, pays more attention to the poet's political view, exile and love of *Patria* than to his literature. Likewise, Da Vinci's biography entirely focuses on his career as a scientist, inventor, and military engineer, not as an artist. This account never even refers to a single picture or sculpture of him.<sup>139</sup> Fascism sought to transform Italy into a new nation, a Fascist nation. These unexpected narrative focuses in the textbook's Renaissance history can be the evidence to expose such Fascism's aspiration in education. By stressing soldiers, patriots, adventurers, and scientists more than artistic or literary men, the regime preaches through the

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<sup>135</sup> "Uno dei principali avvenimenti della storia, il quale segna l'inizio dell'età moderna, è la scoperta dell'America."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 127.

<sup>136</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 118-32.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124 and *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 126. Castaldi and Manuzio were fifteenth-century printers and publishers in Italy. It is known that both contributed to the improvement of printing technique and some controversially attributes the invention of the moveable type (but by wood) to Castaldi before Gutenberg.

<sup>138</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 229-32; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 124-26; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 117-24.

<sup>139</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 218-20; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 124-25.

textbooks that Italians used to be (and therefore will be again under Fascism) a nation not only of highly sophisticated culture and dazzling artistic heritages but also of dauntless pioneers, fighters, and inventors armed with iron will and an innovative mind.

This study has looked into the interpretation of medieval and Renaissance history in Fascist textbooks so far. But what was the view of the books on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before the French Revolution and how were they told to children? In historical studies, in terms of European history, these centuries are normally identified as the Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the Enlightenment. The *Libro unico di Stato* ignores them all: none of these words nor a definition of them appear in the text in spite of their historical importance. Instead, the text in these centuries focuses on Italy's miseries under the Spanish domination, the Battle of Lepanto (1571), patriotic episodes (Masaniello, Pietro Micca, and Balilla), the Wars of Succession (Spanish, Polish, and Austrian, 1700-1748), the foundation of the Kingdom of Sardinia under the Savoy, and certain Italian scholars or writers (Galilei, Giambattista Vico, Ludovico Muratori, Vittorio Alfieri, Cesare Beccaria etc).<sup>140</sup>

This is not only to underscore patriotism and the nation's military or intellectual capacity. It is also an inevitable choice for the authors since the textbooks consistently neglect any negative aspect of the Catholic Church in medieval and Renaissance history. It would be impossible to explain the causes and effects of the Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the birth of the Enlightenment thought without revealing the Catholic Church's wrongdoings. Hence, the authors simply decided to ignore them. The absence of the Reformation, Counter Reformation and the Enlightenment in the text is, after all, another attempt to deliberately minimise or omit unfavourable historical facts.

We can find the same narrative approach in the accounts of the Savoy. The textbook's narrative of the Savoy dates back to the eleventh century and sporadically appears throughout the Renaissance and the subsequent centuries. Like in the case of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the book constantly praises the Savoy for their military valour, diligent work-ethic, fair rule of its territory, and strong will to unite Italy. On the contrary, any

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<sup>140</sup> Only the 1930s' book gives a vague hint of the Reformation and Enlightenment with a paragraph title, "Intellectual and reformative movement"; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 133-40; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 129-40.

unfavourable fact to the Savoy –the aristocratic family’s French root, some Savoy dukes’ subordination to (and service for) foreign kings etc– is concealed or trivialised.<sup>141</sup>

This thesis has consistently argued that the dichotomy of the Two Italies (unity-division / good-bad) is one of the key narrative frameworks in the historiography of the Fascist schoolbook. Certainly, we can see the Two Italies thesis in the textbook’s accounts of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and subsequent centuries as well; the tendency to blame divisive behaviours –factionalism, jealous infighting, and treason– for Italy’s failure or humiliation is a typical argument of this dichotomy. The 1930s’ text, for instance, assures that powerful and rich Italian maritime republics “often fought each other because of jealousy and moving towards their own downfall”.<sup>142</sup> There are also brief but clearly critical descriptions of traitors: Ludovico Sforza is described as “a wretched Italian” thanks to his invitation of the French troops in Italy in 1494, and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s occupation of Florence in 1530 is attributed to Malatesta Baglioni’s betrayal.<sup>143</sup> The Two Italies thesis or the dichotomy of unity-division is more conspicuous in the 1940s’ edition. Under the chapter title, “*Un’altra Sventura d’Italia: il Disordine* (Another Misfortune of Italy: Disorder)”, the book says:

“Despite many glories, there is a lack of order. And an Empire without order cannot last. Between cities, jealousy became increasingly bitter and frequently turned into often battles: [...] Frequently, also inside the communes, [...] riots broke out and fights between citizens of the same city flared up. [...] Disagreements often led to killings and massacres. Inside of the walls of the city real battles occurred: as in the time of the Gracchus and the era of Marius and Sulla. But, unfortunately, a great leader does not emerge to restore order, to unite the citizens of every Italian city into a single powerful state. Foreign emperors exploit these struggles, [...] hoping to seize the communes. [...] But, when the danger is serious, Italians unite [...]”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), p. 226; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 118, 121, 128, 130–1, 135–7; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 132–4, 136–7.

<sup>142</sup> “Purtroppo queste repubbliche, gelose l’una dell’altra, spesso combatterono tra loro avviandosi così alla decadenza.”; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 114.

<sup>143</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 127 and 129.

<sup>144</sup> “In tanta gloria, manca però l’ordine. E un Impero senz’ordine non può durare. Fra città e città, la gelosia diviene sempre più aspra, si cambia sovente in aperte battaglie: [...] Spesso, anzi, anche all’interno dei Comuni [...] scoppiano dei tumulti e si accendono lotte fra cittadini di una stessa città. [...] Le discussioni, sovente, giungono ad uccisioni e stragi. Entro le mura la stessa città avvengono vere e proprie battaglie:



After this long and meticulous description, the textbook launches the story of the Lombard League and Battle of Legnano in two and a half pages. The message is obvious: unity brings glory and division leads to misery. In addition, we can see another equally important message in the paragraph above; national unity needs a leader who can end chaos and discord. Inserting a description of the parallel to Roman cases, the author might have expected attentive teachers to remind students of not only Caesar but also their current leader, Mussolini, when they teach this paragraph.

However, the textbook's argument of 'Two Italies' is inconsistent and contradictory. The 1930s' edition often takes an ambivalent and confusing stance. It mourns Italy's political tragedies from the sixteenth to eighteenth century but simultaneously hails that the nation nevertheless maintained its intellectual and cultural superiority and superb militancy in this period.<sup>145</sup> How can one rationalise this paradox? The textbook gives no comprehensible explanation to clarify how and why Italy suddenly fell into endless fratricidal struggles and foreign invasions, despite the fact that the nation's superior abilities and spirit were still intact. Was this only because the Italians were too jealous of each other or because the nation did not have a great political leader able to unite it? If so, how does such a jealousy-ridden factious nation have spiritual superiority over others, or why did such a great leader not emerge in those centuries? No answer is given. The 1940s' book is worse in this regard. Because this edition more often than the 1930s' text underlines Italy's political division and discord from the early Middle Ages, the fact that the book does not give a reason for this disparity between the nation's politics and its cultural greatness is more visible.<sup>146</sup>

It is not easy to recount 1,300 years of history, from AD 476 to 1789, in a small number of pages. Nevertheless, the Fascist textbook's historiography of these periods is far from adequate. Above all, the textbook's selection of topics is questionable: political-ideological concerns often surpassed pedagogical or academic needs and this yielded a poor quality of historiography in term of providing historical knowledge. The Vikings, the Black Death, the Mongolian invasion,

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come al tempo dei Gracchi, come all'epoca di Mario e Silla. Ma ora, purtroppo, non sorge un grande capo per ricondurre l'ordine, per unire tutti cittadini di ogni città d'Italia in un solo potente stato. Gli Imperatori stranieri approfittano, anzi, di queste lotte [...] nella speranza di impadronirsi dei Comuni. [...] Ma quando il pericolo è grave, gli Italiani si uniscono [...]."; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 212-13.

<sup>145</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 128, 131, 133, 138-40.

<sup>146</sup> *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 199-200, 205-8, 212-13; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 127, 129, 138.

the Reformation, the Inquisition, and many other key events or facts in these centuries, which hugely and widely affected the European world, are absent in the text whilst the book gives lengthy accounts of minor historical facts and figures in order to stress patriotism or Italian greatness. Of course, this problem is found in the textbook's ancient history as well but it is far more noticeable in the medieval and Renaissance history.

Besides, it is not only the choice of topics that hinders the quality of the textbooks. The shift of narrative focus from the Church to the Italian greatness might also cause confusion amongst students. Although the textbooks intend to demonstrate continuity of the *Italianità* through the Church and the great Italian achievements, no explanation is given about how these two relate to each other or how very similar Catholicism is to the spirit of *Italianità*, i.e., bravery, tenacity, love of freedom and independence, creativity, and patriotism.

In the history between AD 476 and the pre-Risorgimento, the main goal of *Libro unico* remains the same as its ancient and Roman history; to stress Italy's historical destiny to civilise the world and the greatness of Italian nation. However, the Fascist school textbooks face a more difficult and challenging task in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as Italy's tremendous contributions to the development of art, culture, and humanity are no longer accompanied by its political dominance in these periods. Thus the textbooks shift their narrative focus from the Church (or Catholicism) to great achievements of the Italians. In the textbook's early Middle Ages, the Church or Papacy is the sole protagonist as the protector of civilisation and the spiritual moral leader of the Christian world; later the greatness of *Italianità* (city-states, maritime republics, the genius of Renaissance men of culture, brave adventurers and sailors, *condottieri*, scientists, and patriots) becomes the central theme of the narrative. Yet, undoubtedly, both are well-established themes already in the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy's historiographies.

Indeed, Fascist historical narrative is far from entirely new or original. It often repeated the same repertoires or arguments which had been well developed in the Risorgimento and post-unification Italy. Nevertheless, Fascist interpretations and uses of history are still worthy of analysis. First and foremost, the Fascist version of history in the schoolbooks served the regime's clear political-ideological goals; to legitimise Fascism and to instil Fascist values. For these purposes, as we have seen in this part, the *Libro unico* sometimes simply repeats existing images, myth, perceptions and rhetoric or, if necessary, revises them with different focal points, narrative strategies and messages which reflect Fascism's own ideas and needs.

### **The Risorgimento, Liberal Italy, the Great War, and Fascism**

In the closing paragraph of the 1930s' *Libro III classe*, the author says:

"Italy, divided and enslaved a hundred years ago, is today one of the world's major powers, to which it [Italy] displays an admirable show of discipline, labour and faith. The heroes and martyrs of the Risorgimento, the Great War, and the Fascist Revolution have made the Fatherland free, united, prosperous and powerful."<sup>147</sup>

This comment illustrates the Fascist intention to claim the Risorgimento for their movement's historical and moral heredity. By attributing Italy's contemporary greatness to the merits of, not only heroes in the national unification but also Fascists themselves, this textbook account tacitly argues that Fascism succeeded the Risorgimento and continued its ideals. Equally, we can locate the regime's motivation to link Fascism with the spiritual legacy of the Risorgimento and the Great War in history teaching from the fact that the *Libro unico* taught this recent history twice: first, to third graders and then again to fifth graders.

It is, as we have seen, evident that Fascism wanted to identify itself with *Romanità* and manipulated Roman history for this purpose. Yet it was insufficient to only claim Fascism's historical legitimacy and substantial Italianness. Ancient Rome was too distant a past and there were many non Italian precedents which could claim to be heirs of the Roman Empire; the Byzantine, the Holy Roman Empire, French revolutionaries, British imperialists and so on. It is even more problematic to seek a solution in the Middle Ages and Renaissance because the nation was always divided. So, Fascism also needed to search for its spiritual-ideological roots in a more recent past, that is, the Risorgimento and World War I, in order to consolidate its historical legitimacy.<sup>148</sup>

However, use of the recent past is somewhat risky. For many, memories of the past are still vivid and there are plenty of available first hand testimonies and witnesses to historical events. Thus, in order to mobilise a recent past for political, ideological, and propagandistic purposes, a

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<sup>147</sup> "L'Italia, cento anni fa divisa e schiava, è oggi una delle maggiori potenze del mondo, al quale presenta un mirabile spettacolo di disciplina, di lavoro e di fede. Gli eroi ed i martiri del Risorgimento, della grande guerra, della Rivoluzione Fascista hanno fatto la Patria libera, unita, prospera e forte."; *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 327.

<sup>148</sup> David Laven, 'Italy' in *What is a Nation, Europe 1789-1914*, eds. by Timothy Baycroft and Mark Hewitson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 269-70.

more plausible, coherent, and tightly controlled official historiography or presentation of history is required. For this reason, the Fascist regime imposed more systematic and centralised controls on academic or cultural activities related to the history of the Risorgimento and Great War. Under the regime, celebrations or restorations of medieval-Renaissance history and traditions were largely entrusted to local initiatives (municipal governments, individual local Fascist dignitaries, autonomous private cultural organisations etc.) though the government in Rome or by the central leadership of the Fascist party executed indirect controls and interventions.<sup>149</sup> Even Roman history was not under the total control of the Fascist regime; the most active cultural institute in the study of *Romanità* during the *Ventennio*, the *Istituto di Studi Romani* (Institute of Roman Studies) officially remained private despite the large proportion of the governmental subsidies in its budget and its close collaboration with the regime.<sup>150</sup> In contrast, Mussolini appointed De Vecchi, one of the most powerful Fascist politicians, to the head of *la Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* (National Society for the History of the Risorgimento), and De Vecchi brought various academic or cultural institutes, societies, and museums of the Risorgimento history under his leadership. Although other fields of historical studies (ancient, medieval, and modern history) were also reorganised in Fascist Italy and eventually had their own national organisations, studies on the Risorgimento were kept under more centralised and firmer control than others.<sup>151</sup>

It is likely that this attitude is apparent in the school textbooks. The regime was more attentive to construct a coherent historical narrative in the textbooks in terms of its message. So, in the text, all stories highlight patriotic or nationalistic aspects and Fascist Italy is depicted as the ultimate and righteous conclusion of all these tales. While the medieval and Renaissance history in the books shifts its narrative focus one after another (the Catholic Church, communes, and the great Italians), the section from the Risorgimento to Fascism seems more concentrated in this regard. Yet it does not mean that the regime was successful enough to produce a highly effective and original historiography of the Risorgimento and post-unification Italy. This is a

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<sup>149</sup> Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, p. 254; Lasansky here argues that the use of medieval past was systematically orchestrated and supervised by the regime in Fascist Italy. However, this never means that Fascism gripped a tighter control over the Middle Ages than other periods in the use of history. What she says is that the use of medieval past was more controlled by the central government in Fascist Italy than in the Liberal era.

<sup>150</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 29–49.

<sup>151</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in Camicia*, pp. 93–191.

question which needs further assessment through an analysis of the text. But before that it is necessary to examine the historical perceptions and myths of the Risorgimento, the Great War, and the rise of Fascism in Liberal Italy and the Fascist era.

#### 1. Divided memory, divided history: from the Risorgimento to Fascism in unified Italy

As Michel Foucault argues, memory of the past is controlled by the present political needs so that history is constantly rewritten.<sup>152</sup> The Risorgimento history in the Fascist era is a good example of this. Fascists were eager to embellish or dramatise the birth of their movement and claimed that the nation's recent past, from the Risorgimento to the end of Liberal Italy, was the embryo of Fascism.<sup>153</sup> This claim, of course, faced opposition before, during, and after the *Ventennio*. From conservative liberals to radical communists, many antifascist intellectuals proposed various counter-interpretations of the Risorgimento, Liberal Italy, and the Great War, which were based not only upon historical records but also memoirs, testimonies, and popular myths like the Fascist version.<sup>154</sup> Yet, this 'divided' history around the nation's recent past was not an unprecedented phenomenon. In the post-unification Italy, such a phenomenon was equally conspicuous; in the newly created nation-state where many different political ideas were still competing against constitutional monarchism, claiming the state's foundation myth as one's ideological or spiritual origins was an effective tool to achieve political legitimacy. Therefore, long before the birth of Fascism, there were many different, often competing, historical interpretations and presentations of the Risorgimento and of unified Italy which predictably left a clear mark on Fascism's use of history.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 12.

<sup>153</sup> Pier Giorgio Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo: miti, credenze e valori nella stabilizzazione del regime* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 88.

<sup>154</sup> These are some well known examples; Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Bari: Laterza, 1928); Leone Ginzburg, *La tradizione del Risorgimento* (Rome: Castelvechi, 2014; originally written in 1943 and first published in 1945); Gramsci, *Il Risorgimento e l'Unità*; Nello Rosselli, *Saggi sul Risorgimento e altri scritti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1946); Luigi Salvatorelli, *Nazionalfascismo* (Turin: Gobetti, 1923); Luigi Salvatorelli, *Pensiero e azione del Risorgimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1943); Gaetano Salvemini, *Scritti sul Risorgimento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963; contains many essays written during his exile during the *Ventennio*).

<sup>155</sup> John Foot, *Italy's Divided Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 11; Massimo Baioni, 'Risorgimento e letture del 1848-49 nel Ventennio fascista', in *Memoria, rappresentazioni e protagonisti del 1848 italiano*, ed. by Renato Camurri (Verona: Cierre, 2006), pp. 127-29.

Almost immediately after the unification, different interpretations of the Risorgimento and the process of Italian unification began to appear. The main cause of the problem was the fact that the newly created nation-state became a kingdom under the flag of the Savoy. Diverse political ideas to unite Italy had been proposed, promoted and experimented during the Risorgimento, and therefore not all Italians were happy with the constitutional monarchy as the final outcome of the unification. Although most soon compromised with the reality, some intransigent republicans or democratic federalists, like Mazzini and Cattaneo, still saw the dynastic Italy as a betrayal of the nation's popular democratic aspiration or a deviation from the Risorgimento spirit and kept opposing constitutional monarchism after the unification.<sup>156</sup> For example, declaring the foundation of *Alleanza repubblicana* (Republican Alliance) in 1866, Mazzini asserted:

"The monarchy – anyone who knows history is aware of it – is not an Italian national institution. [...] in Italy the monarchy never represented an element of progress, never identified itself with the life and development of the country; it came with the foreigner [and] remained foreign; [...] in Italy, the monarchy never wrote a single page of history that resulted in a progressive change for the country."<sup>157</sup>

Their antagonism did not end with the deaths of Mazzini and Cattaneo. Rather the deaths of two great ideologues divided the nation's perceptions of the Risorgimento history and its consequence (the unification) even more. Since his death in 1872, for instance, the anniversaries of Mazzini's birth or death often became vociferous occasions in which intransigent republicans and radical democrats gathered to pay homage to him and proclaimed his idea of popular

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<sup>156</sup> For Mazzini, Cattaneo and their followers' opposition to Kingdom of Italy, see Nicola Tranfaglia, 'La Repubblica' in *I luoghi della memoria: personaggi e date dell'Italia unita*, ed. by Mario Isnenghi (Rome: Laterza, 1997), pp. 295–304; Ettore Rotelli, 'L'azione federalista di Cattaneo da Milano a Napoli' in *Cattaneo e Garibaldi: Federalismo e Mezzogiorno*, eds. by Assunta Trova and Giuseppe Zichi (Rome: Carocci, 2004), pp. 59–62; Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 170–225.

<sup>157</sup> "La monarchia – chi sa la storia lo sa – non è istituzione nazionale d'Italia. [...] in Italia la monarchia non rappresentò mai un elemento di progresso, non s'immedesimò mai colla vita e collo sviluppo del paese; venuta dallo straniero rimase straniera; [...] in Italia, la monarchia scrisse mai una di quelle pagine storiche che segnano mutamento di sorti progressive al paese."; 'Alleanza Repubblicana', in *Giuseppe Mazzini, Scritti politici*, ed. by Franco Della Peruta (Turin: Einaudi, 1969), p. 555. This manifesto was first published as a leaflet in September 1866. To see an original copy of it, visit the museum founded in Mazzini's birth place in Genoa (*Museo del Risorgimento di Genova, Casa natale di Mazzini*).

democratic republicanism as the real tradition and the goal of the movement for Italy's unification.<sup>158</sup>

It was not only events to venerate iconic figures like Mazzini where different views of the past were expressed. Commemorations of key events or dates in the Risorgimento also frequently turned into confrontations between competing historical interpretations. Episodes around the 1848 celebrations in 1898, the fiftieth anniversary of the revolutionary year, epitomise this. In Milan, while the municipal government and moderate liberals presented Milan's Five Days as a purely patriotic and perfectly harmonised struggle for the national unity and independence in the official celebration, republicans and socialists organised a separate commemorative event in which they emphasised characters of a popular uprising or a revolution for liberty in the Five Days. In Bologna too, many populist democrats and republicans disagreed with their local government which tried to mute any presentation of the city's 8 August insurrection in 1848 as a popular revolution. So they refused to attend the official celebration and organised an alternative ceremony in which the crowd paid tribute to Mazzini and Garibaldi by singing Mameli's anthem. In the same year, there was also a similar incident in Florence around the anniversary of the 1859 Tuscan revolution.<sup>159</sup>

It was not merely republicans or leftwing democrats who disagreed with the liberal government and the establishment (conservative liberals and monarchists) over its view of the past. Since the Unification, there were constant conflicts between the Church and the liberal regime over ideological, political and cultural issues derived from the Risorgimento. The root of their conflict again resided in the creation of Kingdom of Italy itself; the Papal state had lost most of its territories due to the unification, and the new kingdom clarified its principle of secularism from the beginning. So the clash between the two was inevitable. The Church, for example, raged

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<sup>158</sup> Maurizio Ridolfi, 'Mazzini' in *I luoghi della: personaggi*, p. 13; Franco Della Peruta, 'Il mito del Risorgimento e l'estrema sinistra dell'Unità al 1914', in *Il Risorgimento: Il mito*, p. 41. For more about the republican iconography of Mazzini (an exemplary case with the analysis of its language and symbolism), refer to Maurizio Ridolfi, *Dalla setta al partito: Il caso dei repubblicani cesenati dagli anni risorgimentali alla crisi di fine secolo* (Rimini: Maggioli, 1988), pp. 257-77.

<sup>159</sup> Bruno Tobia, *Una patria per gli italiani: Spazi, itinerari, monumenti nell'Italia unita (1870-1900)* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1991), pp. 152-58 (for Milan); Massimo Baioni, *La 'religion della Patria'. Musei e Istituti del culto Risorgimento (1884-1918)* (Treviso: Pagus, 1995), p. 77 (for Bologna); Simonetta Soldani, 'From Divided Memory to Silence: The 1848 Celebrations in Italy' in *1848: A European Revolution? International Ideas and National Memories of 1848*, ed. by Axel Körner (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 149-51 (for all three).

when the Italian central government set up the first Sunday of June as the Constitutional Day, to celebrate the declaration of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia's Statute in 1848 which later became the constitution of the unified Italy; because this 'civic' ceremonial day was very close to, sometimes coincided with, the Corpus Christi, one of the biggest Catholic annual feasts. Moreover, the Vatican again felt offended when the government in Rome formalised the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> September (the date when the Italian Army occupied Rome in 1870) in 1895. As a result, the exchange of criticism between the two was increased for a while.<sup>160</sup>

Certainly, the ruling class of Italy was well aware of the new kingdom's insufficient legitimacy. So, the central government, then formed by conservative liberals and the royalists, was conscious of the urgency to broaden and strengthen consensus in favour of the constitutional monarchy. History was therefore mobilised by the liberal regime to legitimise the national unification under the House of Savoy's leadership and the Risorgimento naturally became the central topic in such an effort.<sup>161</sup> The liberal government's presentation of the Risorgimento history specifically concentrated on two aspects; the cult of Savoy kings (especially Carlo Alberto and Vittorio Emanuele II who reigned in the most decisive years of the Risorgimento and concluded the Unification), and the myth of harmonious or united Italians, under the Savoy's leadership, in the struggle for the national liberation and Unification.

For the six decades of Liberal Italy, innumerable streets and piazzas all over the country were named or renamed after Carlo Alberto and Vittorio Emanuele II. Likewise, hundreds of statues and monuments dedicated to the two Savoy monarchs were erected in many towns and cities by the (municipal or central) government or liberal-royalist associations. The most pompous example among them might be the so-called *Il Vittoriano*, National Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, in Rome.<sup>162</sup> Also, as the Mazzini's case was used by republicans, the death of Vittorio Emanuele II gave the liberal government and monarchists good opportunities to promote the cult. When the king suddenly died in 1878 mourning and condolence broke out nationwide.

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<sup>160</sup> Both cases are briefly explained in Porciani, 'Stato e nazione', pp. 391-92. For more about these two incidents and other conflicts between the Church and the Kingdom of Italy, see Giovanni Spadolini, *L'opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al '98* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), pp. 187-211, 260, 299-307 or Guido Formigoni, *L'Italia dei cattolici: Dal Risorgimento a oggi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), pp. 35-59.

<sup>161</sup> Tobia, *Una patria*, pp. v-vi; Umberto Levra, 'Vittorio Emanuele II', in *I luoghi della: personaggi*, p. 49; Umberto Levra, *Fare gli Italiani: memoria e celebrazione del Risorgimento* (Turin: Comitato di Torino dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1992), pp. 41-172.

<sup>162</sup> Tobia, *Una patria*, pp. 28-55.



Such an atmosphere of grief was in general spontaneous and sincere, but it was equally true that many government officials and conservative liberals made the most of the occasion to disseminate the myth of '*Re galantuomo*' (Gentleman King) paying homage to him in a plethora of official statements and public speeches. Besides, the tribute to the dead king was never a one-time event. In 1884, the central government was actively involved in organising a 'national pilgrimage' to his tomb at the Pantheon in Rome.<sup>163</sup> Moderate liberals and royalists, in short, depicted the king as the father of the nation, a beloved and respected monarch for his dignity, determination, courage, love of his people, and modesty.<sup>164</sup>

It was, however, not only in public events and spaces where we can see the liberal ruling class's exaltation of the Savoy kings in order to justify the Piedmontese royal family's indispensable role in the national unification. Also, various forms of written historiography like school textbooks, historical novels, children's literature, and popular or juvenile magazines were used to diffuse such a myth of the Risorgimento.<sup>165</sup> School textbooks are particularly noteworthy. Though the government was reluctant to be directly involved in regulating the curriculum and syllabus of history classes at schools before the 1880s,<sup>166</sup> there had already been some history textbooks which played down the impact of republicanism or democratic ideals, emphasised the failure of revolutionary conspiracies, and on the other hand, celebrated the Savoy family's role in the Risorgimento.<sup>167</sup> From the early 1880s, with the government's more active involvement in history education, a new narrative tendency on the Risorgimento in schoolbooks began to emerge; the myth of 'harmonious' Risorgimento. According to the introduction of a popular

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., pp. 100–13; Levra, 'Vittorio Emanuele II', pp. 52–56; Mario Isnenghi, 'La piazza', in *I luoghi della memoria: strutture ed eventi dell'Italia unita*, ed. by him (Rome: Laterza, 1997), p. 47.

<sup>164</sup> Christopher Duggan, 'Political cults in liberal Italy, 1861–1922' in *The cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians*, eds. by him, Stephen Gundle, and Giuliana Pieri (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 16.

<sup>165</sup> Levra, 'Vittorio Emanuele II', pp. 57–61; Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 19–39.

<sup>166</sup> A study assumes that it was because the liberal government might be cautious not to clash with the Church's interests in education and not to stimulate the vivid memory of many Mazzinians, Bourbon royalists, and ex-papal state officials; see Soldani, 'Il Risorgimento a scuola', pp. 142–43.

<sup>167</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 25–27, 43–47. As examples of such textbooks, Antonino Parato, *Piccolo compendio della storia d'Italia: esposta per biografie contenente la storia romana, del Medio evo e moderna ad uso delle scuole primarie superiori e delle scuole popolari del Regno* (Turin: Paravia, 1868; 1<sup>st</sup> edn 1865) and Giulio Tarra, *Lecture graduate al fanciullo italiano pt. III* (Milan: Messaggi, 1886; 1<sup>st</sup> edn 1863).

history textbook in this period, “the common pain” of the Italians in the Risorgimento “brought them into brotherhood” and made them unite.<sup>168</sup> Another textbook also states:

“He [Mazzini] continued his tireless work as an agitator until the start of the glorious war of 1859, in which **the people and the king [Vittorio Emanuele II], helping each other**, began that series of victories which [eventually] led to the Breach of Porta Pia. And Mazzini, great as always, **made a very effective contribution**.”<sup>169</sup>

This myth of ‘harmonious’ Risorgimento or ‘united struggle’ for the Unification began to be officialised around the last two decades of the nineteenth century with changes in the political and social climate in Italy. The power of the Historical Left, such as republicans and populist democrats, gradually grew in parliament and eventually became dominant. In addition, the extension of the franchise, growing numbers of the lower middle class and upper working class, and the rise of the new left (socialist), urged the liberal establishment (the Historical Right and Left both) to embrace more democratic and popularised elements into the official view of the Risorgimento. Thus the central government’s official presentation, especially since Francesco Crispi came into power in 1887, willingly accepted the two greatest revolutionaries of the Risorgimento; Mazzini and Garibaldi.<sup>170</sup> Now the two democratic-popular icons of the Risorgimento were worshiped as ‘the fathers of *Patria*’ alongside Vittorio Emanuele II and Cavour, who were already heroes of moderate liberals and loyalists. Schools taught Mazzini and Garibaldi’s contributions, public monuments dedicated to them were erected, and the State even sponsored a selection of Mazzini’s writings for publication in 1905.<sup>171</sup> However, this embracement of revolutionary heroes was selective; the official history did not mention

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<sup>168</sup> “il commune dolore aveva affratellati i nostri padri [...]”; Siro Corti, *Racconti educative di storia moderna e breve storia del Risorgimento italiano* (Turin: Paravia, 1895), p. viii.

<sup>169</sup> “Continuò la sua instancabile opera di agitatore, sino a che scoppiò la gloriosa guerra del 1859, in cui popolo e sovrano, dandosi la destra, incominciarono quella serie di vittorie che dovevano condurci alla Breccia di Porta Pia. E Mazzini, sempre grande, prestò la sua opera efficacissima.”; Siro Corti, *Racconti e biografie di storia patria per le scuole primarie e popolari* (Turin: Paravia, 1888), p. 122.

<sup>170</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 91; Porciani, ‘Stato e nazione’, pp. 390–96, 414–15; Della Peruta, ‘Il mito del Risorgimento’, pp. 41–45.

<sup>171</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, p. 39; Isnenghi, ‘La piazza’, p. 47; Mack Smith, *Mazzini*, p. 230; Ridolfi, ‘Mazzini’, pp. 17–23.

Mazzini's anti-monarchism and Garibaldi's conflict with Cavour, or avoided discussing the fact. Instead, it exalted Mazzini's moral superiority, Garibaldi's image of the 'disciplined revolutionary', and both men's sacrificial devotion to the Unification as a part of the 'harmonious' Risorgimento myth.<sup>172</sup>

Predictably, however, promoting the 'harmonious' Risorgimento myth to broaden the consensus in favour of the constitutional monarchy and parliamentary liberalism failed to silence dissident voices.<sup>173</sup> Most of all, the official version of idealised Risorgimento was refuted, not only by symbolic political actions or commemorations of intransigent groups, but also by counter historiographies of some intellectuals. One of the well examined in those historiographies is Alfredo Oriani's book, *La lotta politica in Italia* (*The Political Struggle in Italy*, 1892/1913). In this book, Oriani argued that the process of the Unification heavily relied on the limited elite classes, ditched noble ideals and hopes for the nation's future, and abandoned the autonomous participation of the masses only in order to create an unified nation-state. Consequently, he assessed, the result of the Risorgimento was merely a dynastic conquest accompanied by petite administrative or diplomatic procedure.<sup>174</sup>

Likewise, the Great War, which many interventionists thought as a challenge to test the national solidarity, was not able to reconcile Liberal Italy's divided historical memories. The question of Italy's entry into the war before May 1915 exposed the nation's different, often conflicted, views of the past and present.<sup>175</sup> Italy's wartime experience also made Italians more

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<sup>172</sup> Ascenzi, *Education and the metamorphoses*, pp. 43-47, 52-57; P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, p. 91. For more about 'institutionalisation' of Mazzini and Garibaldi after their death, refer to Giovanni Belardelli, *Mazzini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), pp. 236-43; Della Peruta, 'Il mito del Risorgimento', pp. 41-45; Mario Isnenghi, *Garibaldi fu ferito: Il mito, le favole* (Rome: Donzelli, 2007); Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 1-18, 364-92.

<sup>173</sup> Porciani, 'Stato e nazione', pp. 427-28; Riall, *Garibaldi*, pp. 365-66.

<sup>174</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in camicia*, p. 30; Alberto Mario Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2004), p. 134; Stefano Marcuzzi, 'Alfredo Oriani e il revisionismo risorgimentale', in *Il fantasma dell'unità: riletture del Risorgimento tra Grande Guerra e Fascismo*, eds. by Pellegrino Favuzzi and Alessandro Metlica (Milan-Udine: Mimesis, 2013), pp. 105-10.

<sup>175</sup> Debates on Italy's participation in the war were mainly discussed over two questions: 'to enter or not', and 'to be allied with which side if it enters'.

divided in the perception of the Liberal state and the historical meaning of the war itself.<sup>176</sup> From the beginning of Italy's participation in the conflict, the vast majority of peasants and the urban poor were reluctant or indifferent to the war. They did not share the enthusiasm of the Interventionists, but, nonetheless, were conscripted to serve as rank-and-file soldiers in the Italian Army. There were also some convinced neutralists, Catholic pacifists and International socialists who constantly opposed the war, although they were the minority in the middle and upper classes whose voices were often repressed or marginalised after May 1915.<sup>177</sup> So, in order to boost the morale and unite the country for the war effort, the military authority and the government embarked on propaganda drive. This propaganda did not merely demonise the enemy but also defined the war as the completion of the Risorgimento through the liberation of *la terra irredenta* (the unredeemed land), and depicted Vittorio Emanuele III as a natural-born military leader.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the wartime propaganda is doubtful. Although the army's morale was generally restored in the last year of the war thanks to improved welfare provisions for troops and the tantalising promise of better tenant conditions (or even land) for the drafted peasants, mutinies or desertions amongst soldiers and civilian protests for better food supply on the home front continued until the end of the conflict.<sup>179</sup> Mockery songs and jokes on the High Command or the diminutive king among ordinary soldiers were common as well.<sup>180</sup> In the end, despite the official propaganda, it is doubtful that the majority of rank-and-file soldiers and the masses on the home front really believed in the 'sacred' aim of the war and saw their toil as a necessary sacrifice to complete the Risorgimento.

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<sup>176</sup> Giovanna Procacci, 'The Disaster of Caporetto', in *Disastro! Disasters in Italy since 1860: Culture, Politics, Society*, eds. by John Dickie, John Foot and Frank M. Snowden (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 142-43.

<sup>177</sup> On Italy's divided opinions of the war (before, during and after), see Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*, pp. 37-92; John Dickie and John Foot, 'Introduction' in *Disastro!*, pp. 26-30; Mario Isnenghi, 'La Grande Guerra', in *I luoghi della: strutture*, pp. 273-309.

<sup>178</sup> Andrea Cotticelli, *La propaganda italiana nella Grande Guerra* (Rome: Pagine, 2011); Elisa Signori, 'La Grande Guerra e la monarchia italiana: il mito del "re soldato"', in *Monarchia, tradizione, identità nazionale: Germania, Giappone e Italia tra Otto e Novecento*, ed. by Marina Tesoro (Milan: Mondadori, 2004), pp. 183-214.

<sup>179</sup> Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*, pp. 66-92; Antonio Gibelli, *La Grande Guerra degli italiani 1914-1918* (Milan: Sansoni, 2001), pp. 107-24.

<sup>180</sup> Signori, 'La Grande Guerra', pp. 204-5.

Post-war Italy was not different. The catastrophic experiences of the conflict caused ever more Italians to deplore the state's leadership and social order, while the liberal ruling class and nationalists became desperate to justify the war itself. The 1919 parliamentary inquiry into the Caporetto disaster and debates around it well displayed such a chasm. Since the defeat in Caporetto, the ex commander-in-chief General Luigi Cadorna and the Italian High Command had blamed anti-war groups and socialists for the disaster, insisting that they undermined the war effort by encouraging soldiers' desertion and workers' strikes. The inquiry's conclusion dismissed this argument but instead pointed out the military authority's inappropriate strategy and the government's poor leadership in the conduct of the war. Stimulated by the inquiry's conclusion, many socialists and former neutralists seriously questioned not only the legitimacy of the state's war effort but also the necessity of Italy's intervention in the conflict.<sup>181</sup> Thus it is no coincidence that Piero Gobetti's famous critiques of the Risorgimento and history of the Liberal state, *La Rivoluzione liberale* (1924) and *Risorgimento senza eroi* (1926), were conceived after the war.<sup>182</sup> In response to such criticisms, the liberal government and the political right sought to mythicise the Great War as the completion of Risorgimento. So, in post-war Italy, the Liberal state's official presentations, via numerous monuments, cemeteries, public ceremonies, speeches, publications and museum exhibitions, unequivocally described the war as the united, heroic and sacrificial commitment by the Italian people for the patriotic cause. Any popular discontent or military disorder during the war was obliterated or branded as an act of sabotage by anti-national subversives (therefore 'enemies within').<sup>183</sup>

Furthermore, not all advocates of the interventionism in post-war Italy were content with the Liberal government's leadership during and after the war. Extreme nationalists and anti-parliamentary Interventionists, including the early Fascists, were equally hostile to the existing social order and elite class of the Liberal state, although they, like conservative liberals, inevitably vindicated the war and idealised the nation's enormous loss and suffering as a necessary sacrifice to renew Italy. For them, it seemed that parliamentary liberalism, with its ruling class, belonged to the *Italiotta* which failed to maintain spiritual moral legacies of the Risorgimento and fell into decadence.<sup>184</sup> It was of course, Salandra's cabinet and his

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<sup>181</sup> Gibelli, *La Grande Guerra*, pp. 330-34; Procacci, 'The Disaster of', p. 158.

<sup>182</sup> Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 134; Wilda M. Vanek, 'Piero Gobetti and the Crisis of the "Prima Dopoguerra"', *The Journal of Modern History*, 37, 1 (1965), 1-17.

<sup>183</sup> Gibelli, *La Grande Guerra*, pp. 334-36; Procacci, 'The Disaster of', pp. 158-59.

<sup>184</sup> Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista, 1918-1925* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), pp. 116-17.

conservative liberal supporters which decided Italy's entry into the conflict. Yet the strong and determined popular will, according to these anti-liberal interventionists, forced the government into such a decision. Also they asserted that the liberal parliamentary democracy was far from *Italianità* as its failure to secure the nation's 'deserved' reward in Versailles had proved. It was therefore incompatible with the 'real' Italy awakened by the war.<sup>185</sup>

In the Fascist official historiography, we can clearly see the legacy of Liberal Italy's divided interpretation of the past. Fascism inherited the cult of Mazzini from democratic republicans and at the same time embraced conservative liberals' veneration of Vittorio Emanuele II; in Mazzini, Fascists saw a fusion of the popular revolutionary with the nationalist 'civilising mission', and a reconciliation between secular patriotism and religiosity; the 'great king' was seen as a father-figure of the nation.<sup>186</sup> Garibaldi and Cavour were also praised together as the 'fathers' of the national unification by many Fascists; Garibaldi was a charismatic leader of the Italian people and great *condottiero*; Cavour was depicted as a master of *real politik* who safeguarded the nation's interests in diplomacy.<sup>187</sup> The Fascist regime, moreover, positively accepted Pope Pius IX and neo-Guelphs in the Risorgimento history. It carefully eliminated any anti-clerical attitudes in the earlier days of the movement while it, like liberals, hailed the Breach of *Porta Pia* and Rome as the capital of the unified Italy. All of these result from the heterogeneous nature of Fascism.<sup>188</sup> As we already know, various, sometimes contradictory, ideological political and

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-23; Annie Deperchin, 'L'applicazione dei trattati', in *La prima guerra mondiale vol.2*, eds. by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Jean-Jacques Becker, ed. by Antonio Gibelli [Italian edn] (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), pp. 402-4; Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>186</sup> On Fascism's Mazzini, see Belardelli, *Mazzini*, pp. 245-48 and Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo*, pp. 88-90. For examples of the Fascist praise of Vittorio Emanuele II, refer to Francesco Cognasso, *Vittorio Emanuele II* (Turin: UTET, 1942); Adolfo Colombo, 'Gli albori del regno di Vittorio Emanuele II secondo nuovi documenti' *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 23, 10 (1936), 1327-68 and 23, 11 (1936), 1451-1502; Francesco Salata, 'Da Carlo Alberto a Vittorio Emanuele II' *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 22, 12 (1935), 819-44.

<sup>187</sup> For more about the myth of Garibaldi from Liberal Italy to Fascist Italy, refer to Isnenghi, 'Garibaldi' in *I luoghi della: personaggi*, pp. 25-45; Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of*, pp. 1-18, 347-92. For myths of Cavour in the same period, see Harry Hearder, *Cavour* (New York: Longman, 1994), pp. 176-98; Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo*, pp. 92-94. According to Hearder, the general image of Cavour in Liberal Italy was actually little different from the Fascist one. It depicted him as an idealist liberal rather than an absolutely pragmatic statesman; Hearder, *Cavour*, p. 188.

<sup>188</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in camicia*, pp. 158-62; Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo*, p. 95.

cultural currents or movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Italy –socialism, syndicalism, nationalism, republicanism, populism, heroism, nihilism, idealism, social Darwinism, imperialism, Futurism, anti-clericalism, Catholicism etc.- influenced Fascists and gave Fascism its ideological foundations. The Fascist conception of history, as a crucial part of its ideology, was no exception, and therefore the regime's view of the Risorgimento inevitably reflected the Liberal era's divided historical interpretation.

However, to admit the heterogeneity of Fascism's Risorgimento (and afterward) does not mean that Fascism blatantly copied and mingled existing ideas and practices, or its use of the recent past was not idiosyncratic. We can see the evidence of this in Fascism's use of the 'harmonious' Risorgimento myth. While liberals used this myth to appease the dissident groups and to broaden consensus in favour of the constitutional monarchy and the existing social order, the Fascist version was not only for the political consensus but also based upon their conviction of the Two Italies thesis. For Fascists, the Risorgimento was emblematic of the 'new' or 'good' Italy in which the long stagnant *Italianità* finally re-emerged and flourished again.<sup>189</sup> For them, it thus seemed unthinkable that in this era of 'good' Italy, the Unification was achieved only by a series of favourable circumstances and cunning diplomatic manoeuvres without Italian people's strong patriotic will and solidarity –one of the key virtues of *Italianità*–.

Another peculiarity of Fascism's account of Risorgimento history is that it does not share the same ending with the Liberal government's official history. In the Liberal state's perception, the Risorgimento was complete with the victory in 1918 and Italy was now reborn. Fascism denied this. From the Fascist point of view, the Liberal state failed to retain the 'revived' *Italianità* in the Risorgimento and the nation regressed to moral spiritual degeneracy after the Unification.<sup>190</sup> Fascists also believed that Italy's victory in the First World War was not the Risorgimento's finale at all. They, like liberal nationalists, saw World War I as a continuation of the Risorgimento, i.e., the fourth Italian War of Independence and insisted that *Italianità* was resuscitated again with Interventionism. Nevertheless, according to Fascism, remnants of the 'old' Italy still remained even after the victory: corrupt liberal ruling classes with their impotent parliamentary democracy and the 'anti-national' forces like socialists. Fascism argued that the Risorgimento

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<sup>189</sup> G. Gentile, *Dopo la vittoria*; Solmi, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 175. Also refer to the note no. 47 and 56 in Chapter II of this thesis.

<sup>190</sup> G. Gentile, *Che cosa è*, pp. 28-29, 123-25; Nino Sammartano, 'Risorgimento e antirisorgimento', *Critica fascista*, 5, no. 18 (1927), 345-46; Arrigo Solmi, *La genesi del fascismo* (Milan: Treves, 1933).

was not complete until these malaises of the 'old' Italy were completely wiped out and to accomplish this task was its historical mission and the destiny for Italy.<sup>191</sup>

By comparing some comments we can better understand the difference between liberals and Fascists in their view of the consequence of the war and of post-war Italy. On the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1918, the then Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando gave a speech in the Chamber of Deputies. Evaluating historical meanings of the war, which had just ended a few days previously, he said:

"We must, at the same time, **complete** the unity of the nation, that is, the sacred inheritance from our fathers, and the apostles and martyrs of the Risorgimento [...]."<sup>192</sup>

So, thanking all Italians for their war effort, and pronouncing the government's plans for reconstruction and the peace conference, the premier rather theatrically concluded his speech with a quotation from Dante, which implied the 'renewed' Italy through the wartime suffering and predicted a rosy future:

"And the generous blood [...], which so profusely drenched the land, will not have been shed in vain, if the mystery of redemption through sacrifice repeats itself, and if the sacred poet's prophecy comes true: '...centuries go by / Justice returns.../ And the progeny descends from the new sky!'"<sup>193</sup>

We can see the two liberal myths of the Great War in this speech; 'the war accomplished the Risorgimento' and 'Italy was revived or purified by the war'. What is the official Fascist view on

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<sup>191</sup> On Fascism's myth of the 'incomplete' or 'interrupted' Risorgimento, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista II: L'organizzazione dello Stato fascista, 1925-1929* (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), pp. 374-75; Parlato, 'Giovanni Gentile', pp. 80-81; Woolf, 'Risorgimento e Fascismo', p. 76; Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo*, pp. 95-107.

<sup>192</sup> "Dovevamo, ad un tempo, sciogliere il voto del compimento dell'unità nazionale, sacra eredità trasseci dai nostri padri, dagli apostoli, dai martiri del nostro Risorgimento [...]."; *Disorsi parlamentari di Vittorio Emanuele Orlando vol. 4* (Rome: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1965), p. 1430.

<sup>193</sup> "Ed il sangue generoso [...] che ha così copiosamente bagnato la terra, non sarà stato sparso invano, se per esso si rinnoverà il mistero della redenzione attraverso il sacrificio, e se per esso sarà vero il vaticinio del Poeta Sacro: '...secolo si rinnova/ Torna giustizia/ E progenie discende dal ciel noval!'" ; Ibid, p. 1438.



the same event? Dino Alfieri, Deputy Minister of the Fascist Corporation (1929–32), provides an example. He, as a co-director, stated in the official guide booklet of the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution in 1932:

"The overall defence of victory and of liberated lands [...] was launched and carried out by Mussolini [...]. *Popolo d'Italia's* campaign finds big support in the country: former soldiers, mutilated, injured, invalids, prisoners of war, mothers and widows of the dead are on the newspaper's side with their sincere pain. But while the best people displayed resoluteness, official Italy, the dominant class and the caste in power instead produced a pitiful display [...]. The resignation of ministers, cabinets in crisis, evasion of responsibility, and disregard of duty [...]. The Socialist Party, favoured by the Government's weakness and the cowardness of the ruling classes, [...] fostered major unrest [...]."<sup>194</sup>

Here, Alfieri suggested that Italy was not yet fully renewed even after the war, though the spirit of 'good' Italy, *Italianità*, had reawoken; the nation was still divided into the 'good (new)' and the 'bad (old)', and therefore the Risorgimento was not finished. Instead, the completion of the Risorgimento would finally come with the Fascist revolution as another Fascist insisted:

"[Italy] succeeds in completing its unity and independence **as far as saving itself from political, economic and moral disintegration in the post-war era**, thanks to the will of the people back from the trenches [...].

Duce Benito Mussolini, in the symbol of Fascist Lictor, sensed the historical fate of its glorious destiny. Thus,

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<sup>194</sup> "La difesa integrale della vittoria e delle terre liberate [...] è iniziata e proseguita da Mussolini [...]. La campagna del *Popolo d'Italia* trova larghe adesioni nel Paese: ex combattenti, mutilati, feriti, invalidi, prigionieri, madri e vedove dei caduti sono attorno al giornale [...] con la loro passione intatta. Ma mentre il popolo migliore dava uno spettacolo di fermezza, che penoso spettacolo era invece quello dell'Italia ufficiale, della classe dominante, della casta al potere! [...] Dimissioni di Ministri, Gabinetti in crisi, palleggiamento di responsabilità, diserzioni di fronte al dovere. [...] il Pus, favorito dalla debolezza del Governo e dalla viltà delle classi dirigenti [...] alimenta una grossa agitazione [...]."; Dino Alfieri, 'Scopo, carattere, significato della Mostra: Mussolini e la Rivoluzione', in *Guida della Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1932), p. 14.

the world war and our October 1922 revolution increasingly appeared to be **the continuation of the Risorgimento's crowning achievement and ultimate goal.**<sup>195</sup>

Hitherto, this thesis has demonstrated how different receptions of the past from the Risorgimento to the rise of Fascism coexisted in Liberal Italy and what was (and was not) the influence of this 'divided' memory on Fascist historical interpretations. In the next part, this study will apply this argument into the analysis of the history school textbooks. Before that, however, it would be helpful to collect quantitative data of keywords to pinpoint the salient characteristics of Fascism's discussion of this period in the textbooks.

## 2. Quantitative analysis of terminology in textbook narration

There are six volumes of the *Libro unico* (the third and fifth graders, three editions in each grade) which deal with Italian history from the Risorgimento to the Fascist era. Yet the late 1930s' texts are almost identical with the earlier editions (only a few pages are slightly revised). The 1930s' third grader (both editions) is also quite similar to the fifth grader's equivalent part.<sup>196</sup> So, we do not need to count keywords in all six volumes. Instead, I will only analyse the two volumes of the fifth grader (the late 30s' and the 40s') here.

The *Libro unico*'s modern and contemporary history (from the eighteenth to twentieth century) is more militaristic than its medieval and Renaissance part. Tales of battles, armed revolts, soldiers and war heroes dominate the narrative at the expense of other historical aspects. We can ascertain this by counting and comparing a few keywords between these two periods.

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<sup>195</sup> "[L'Italia] riesce a completare la sua unità e indipendenza, fino a salvarsi poi dal dissolvimento politico, economic e morale del dopoguerra, mercé la volontà del popolo reduce dalle trincee [...]. Duce Benito Mussolini, nel simbolo del fascio littorio intuì la necessità storica del suo glorioso destino. Così la guerra mondiale e la nostra rivoluzione dell'ottobre 1922 [...] appaiono sempre meglio come la continuazione del Risorgimento, il suo coronamento, il suo scopo finale."; Gaetano Cogo, 'Della storia nei licei classici', *Annali della istruzione media*, III, (1927-28), p. 4 (Quotation in Ciampi, 'Il Risorgimento e la scuola', p. 372).

<sup>196</sup> Although the 1940s' third grade textbook is not very similar to the same edition's fifth graders, this book is, in fact, not a distinctively different text; in many parts it repeats the late 1930s' third grader's chapter structure, narrative framework, illustrations and sometimes even phrases. But its general atmosphere and tone of the narrative oddly resemble the 1940s' fifth grader book. Accordingly, I judged that to count this edition's keywords would not make a big difference to the result of this quantitative analysis. I thus exempted it.

<Table1: Comparison of keywords between historical periods>

	Medieval & Renaissance		Modern & Contemporary	
	1930s' edn: 45 pages	1940s': 65 p	1930s': 70 p	1940s': 71 p
War, Army	75 (1.66 p/p)	120 (1.84)	192 (2.74)	280 (3.94)
Military virtues	23 (0.41)	30 (0.46) cf. 23 (0.35)	62 (0.88)	30 (0.42)
Culture	29 (0.64)	10 (0.15)	12 (0.17)	5 (0.07)
Intelligence, Pioneer spirit	14 (0.31)	42 (0.64)	8 (0.11)	4 (0.05)
Church	80 (1.77)	51 (0.78)	44 (0.62)	13 (0.18)
Heroism	11 (0.24)	6 (0.09)	27 (0.38)	15 (0.21)
Sacrifice	2 (0.04)	1 (0.01)	25 (0.35)	17 (0.23)
Blood	3 (0.06)	0	14 (0.2)	15 (0.21)
Obey, order	5 (0.11)	25 (0.38)	32 (0.45)	25 (0.35)

As we see from the table above, in the fifth grader's modern and contemporary history, terms related to war or the army, such as *guerra, battaglia, combattimento, truppa, esercito*, etc., appear 2.74 and 3.94 times per page in each edition.<sup>197</sup> Given that the same words are used 1.66 and 1.84 times per page in the medieval and Renaissance history, this is certainly huge increase.<sup>198</sup> Also the words of military virtues like *valore, coraggioso, audace, prode, tenace*, and *bellicoso* are used more; 0.88 (1930s') and 0.42 (1940s') times per page. Although the frequency slightly decreases in the 1940s' edition (0.46 to 0.42), the actual usage as the militaristic connotation increases; whilst the Middle Ages and Renaissance section attributes 7 words out of the 30 to great sailors or adventurers, all 30 words in the modern history part belong entirely to soldiers, fighters, and armed activists for the national independence (see 'cf.' in the table).<sup>199</sup>

<sup>197</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 141-211.

<sup>198</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-135; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-233; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>199</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 141-211; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-135; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-233; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

Conversely, the textbook's claims of the Italian greatness in non-military affairs sharply decrease between the two periods. Appearances of the associated vocabularies in the book verify this. Splendid art, advanced technologies, and civilised culture are suggested as the proof of great *Italianità* in the textbook's medieval and Renaissance chapter. Yet, as the Risorgimento and Liberal Italy part shows no interest in the nation's cultural history, words related to culture (*cultura, civiltà, lingua, colto, arte*) emerge significantly less from the text (look at Table 1, 'culture' row).<sup>200</sup> Likewise, intelligence/creativity and pioneering spirit which are claimed, along with military virtues, as 'superior' traits of the Italianness in the pre-Risorgimento history, are hardly discussed in the modern history section. So, the use of words like *intelligente, genio, inventare*, and *scoperta* plunges from 0.31/0.64 to 0.11/0.05 per page.<sup>201</sup> The presence of the Catholic Church in the text diminishes too. Vocabularies linked to the Church (*Chiesa, cattolico, Papa, pontefice, cristianesimo*) are much less visible in the modern history because the *Libro unico*, in this part, no longer relies as much on the Catholic Church's greatness in order to highlight *Italianità* as it did so in the early Middle Ages. Instead, the majority of these words in the modern history emerge in the account of Risorgimento's neo-Guelphs and in the paragraphs on the Lateran Pact.<sup>202</sup>

However, the intensified message of militarism is not the only characteristic that we can find in the textbook's modern historiography. Fascism also tried to consolidate the cult of heroism in the teaching of the Risorgimento, the Great War and post-war Italy. Although there are many heroic tales in ancient history and the centuries of the geographical discovery sections, nothing is comparable to the heroic stories -some of them look semi-hagiographic- about the Risorgimento and World War I in their frequency, intensity and quantity. As seen in the table, therefore, words related to heroism (*eroe* and *eroicamente*) occur more often in the pages of modern history.<sup>203</sup>

What kind of heroism is idolised by Fascism in the schoolbook's modern history? Are all heroes just valorous fighters? Otherwise, what virtues, aside from military ones, are emphasised as heroic qualities? Quantitative analysis of the language used again gives a clue. Languages of sacrifice, such as *sacrificio, martire* and *vittima [del dovere]*, are in total used 25 (1930s') and

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

17 (1940s') times in the *quinta classe*'s modern history.<sup>204</sup> The appearance rate in the 1940s' edition does not seem high. Yet it might be the case that this virtue is stressed more in this period considering that the same words are scarcely cited in the medieval and Renaissance history.<sup>205</sup> In this regard, we can also see the increased use of the word, blood (*sangue*, *sanguinoso*) between the periods (refer to the table "sacrifice" and "blood" rows).<sup>206</sup> Besides risking one's life for the nation, Fascism hails other kinds of sacrifice; working hard for the country, subjugation of oneself to the greater collective interest, and obedience of the hierarchy. Languages of order, *obbedire*, *ordine*, *obbedienza alla gerarchia*, are the keywords to demonstrate this. Their appearances surge (1930s') or remain at a high level of frequency (1940s') between the two historical periods (see the last row).<sup>207</sup>

To sum up, the Fascist schoolbook's recent history, from the Risorgimento to Fascist Italy, focuses on patriotism to illustrate *Italianità* and presents innumerable heroic tales as exemplary cases for this. Although patriotism is proposed as one of the traits of Italianness in other historical epochs as well, it completely dominates the Risorgimento, Great War and Fascism narratives expelling or marginalising all previously claimed virtues of *Italianità*. Fascist heroism in this period also has a peculiarity. Unlike the liberal counterpart, Fascism's cult of heroes employs a more emotional, sometimes exaggerated, way of story-telling and applies a rather broad definition of sacrifice for the qualification of heroes; in the Risorgimento and the World War, for Fascists, heroes are not only physically sacrifice themselves but also unconditionally serve the nation and absolutely obey the hierarchy and its collective interests. We can confirm this through closer analysis of the text.

### 3. From the French Revolution to Fascist Italy: patriotism, sacrificial heroes and the ideal Fascist men

In ancient history, the greatness of *Romanità* and 'civilising' Roman imperialism are predominant themes of the *Libro unico*'s account. As for the medieval and Renaissance history, the textbook replaces *Romanità* and its 'civilising' imperialism with a puzzled definition of

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<sup>204</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 141-211.

<sup>205</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-135; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-233; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>206</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 136-205; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 141-211; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 91-135; *Libro IV classe* (1941), pp. 193-233; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 117-40.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

*Italianità*. The Church (or Catholicism), autonomous political traditions, cultural or artistic creativity, prowess and militancy, adventurous spirit, and love of the *Patria* (patriotism) are mobilised together as the essence of *Italianità* but none of them conclusively prevails over others. In the history from the Risorgimento to the contemporary, one theme, as a proof and the entity of *Italianità*, dominates the whole text, patriotism. It is true that the Liberal state's historiography of the Risorgimento heavily concentrates on the patriotic virtue as well. There is undeniable continuity in the patriotic discourse between Liberal Italy and Fascism. Fascism, however, does not merely copy liberal practices. It delivers patriotic messages through different narrative devices, focal points and metaphors. The periodization of the Risorgimento in the textbooks also shows such a difference.

As mentioned before, the late 1930s' fifth grader textbook starts the eighteenth century chapter with a clear heading (in block capital), 'IL RISORGIMENTO'. The chapter's introductory paragraph also makes a short but conspicuous remark on it. Assessing the impacts of the War of Successions on Italy, the book says:

"But this time, better lucks befell our Fatherland, from which **the Risorgimento began**."<sup>208</sup>

Moreover, the schoolbook attempts to argue the indispensable connection between the 'beginning' of the Risorgimento and the House of Savoy saying that:

"The Savoy princes therefore assumed the title of the King of Sardinia, and Vittorio Amedeo II was the first to assume the title. From then on, **the House of Savoy would be a cornerstone of the Italian Risorgimento**."<sup>209</sup>

This is, as I have mentioned in Chapter III, some Fascists' (royalists and Volpe's followers) view of the Risorgimento which was obviously imposed into the textbook by De Vecchi's

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<sup>208</sup> "Ma questa volta sorti migliori toccarono alla nostra Patria, della quale s'iniziò allora il risorgimento."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 136.

<sup>209</sup> "I principi sabaudi assunsero pertanto il titolo di re di Sardegna, e Vittorio Amedeo II fu il primo a fregiarsene. Da allora Casa Savoia sarà l'elemento fondamentale del Risorgimento italiano."; Ibid.

influence on historical research and education.<sup>210</sup> This is confirmed by comparing the earlier version of the same textbook. In the early 1930s' edition, the chapter title, 'IL RISORGIMENTO', is situated ahead of the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the sentences above appear without the crucial statements ("the Risorgimento began", "the Savoy would be the fundamental element of the Italian Risorgimento") at the end.<sup>211</sup> So, given that De Vecchi took charge of the directorship of the National Society for History of the Risorgimento in 1933 and became the Minister of National Education in 1935,<sup>212</sup> it is not absurd to assume the correlation between his exertion of power and the changes in the late 1930s' textbook.

Yet the problem is the 1940's edition. In this edition, both the chapter title "IL RISORGIMENTO" and the phrase to indicate the Risorgimento's beginning disappear.<sup>213</sup> This could imply the Fascist regime's withdrawal from the 'Settecento Risorgimento' argument but it is not the case. The 1940s' text actually draws more attention to the Savoy in the eighteenth century; the paragraphs on Vittorio Amedeo II recount the story of the Siege of Turin (1706) which is not mentioned in the previous editions. In this story, the siege is described as a glorious triumph won by the Duke and his people's heroic resistance for freedom against the disdainful French invasion.<sup>214</sup> So, we can see the regime's intention to tie the early history of the Risorgimento with the eighteenth-century Savoy remains intact in the textbook. However, the removal of the chapter title should instead be understood differently. In fact, the 1940s' book is less interested in a making clear-cut periodization than its previous editions. As we have seen in the case of the Renaissance, it sometimes ignores or blurs an entire historical era. However, unlike the Renaissance case, the removal of the chapter title is not to deny the Risorgimento as a historical period. Rather, it is to emphasise historical continuity of the Risorgimento's spirit by emphasising that Italian patriotic traditions existed long before the eighteenth century, and survived the foreign rule over the peninsula. Indeed, this last edition of the Fascist schoolbook inserts Vittorio Amedeo II's story at the end of the chapter, entitled 'PERSONAGGI ED EPISODI NEL

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<sup>210</sup> More explanation on De Vecchi's 'Settecento Risorgimento' is given in the chapter II of this thesis. Refer to footnote no. 73 of the same chapter.

<sup>211</sup> The sentences read; "Ma questa volta sorti migliori toccarono alla nostra Patria.", and "I principi sabaudi assunsero pertanto il titolo di re di Sardegna, e Vittorio Amedeo II fu il primo a fregiarsene."; both in *Libro V classe* (1932), p. 136. The title, 'IL RISORGIMENTO' emerges in p. 147 of the same edition.

<sup>212</sup> Baioni, *Risorgimento in camicia*, p. 105.

<sup>213</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 136.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

PERIODO DELLE DOMINAZIONI STRANIERE IN ITALIA (Persons and Episodes in the period of foreign dominations in Italy)', which includes successive individual heroic episodes from the sixteenth to the first half of eighteenth century, such as Fieramosca, Pope Julius II, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, Ferrucci, the Savoy dukes, Venetian Captains, Masaniello, and Pietro Micca; all of which emphasise their patriotic commitments against brutal foreign invaders or rulers.<sup>215</sup>

The '*Settecento* Risorgimento' thesis offers two advantages: first, it advocates the autochthonous nature of the Risorgimento stressing the spiritual or moral connection between *Italianità* and the patriotic zeal, to create an independent and unified state for the nation. Second, it is a more convenient idea to accommodate the argument that the Savoy did not steal the fruit of the Risorgimento but had contributed to the movement from its inception. The Fascist schoolbook, specifically the late 1930s' version, took on these advantages. Yet, adopting the '*Settecento* Risorgimento' thesis brought a little side-effect as well. It made explaining the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars' influence on Italy and its relationship with the Risorgimento more complicated. It was not possible for the authors to simply skip or marginalise this event because Austria, the Risorgimento Italy's archenemy, acquired its domination over the Northern Italy as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars. Hence, the textbooks needed to explain that the French Revolution and its aftermath affected the Italian movement in a way that they stimulated the Italian people's will to be free and united which already existed before 1789. The 1940s' edition thus conflates the Risorgimento's '*Settecento* beginning' with the patriotic episodes in the previous centuries for this purpose. A closer reading of the French Revolution section will increase our understanding of this.

Although many Fascists negatively judged the French event, all editions of the textbook reservedly conceded the French Revolution and Napoleon's positive influence on Italy. Both versions of the 1930s' book and the 1940s' text attribute a significant number of pages to this event: the twenty six years of history, from the Revolution's outbreak to the fall of Napoleon (1789-1815), occupies 5 (the 1940's) to 6.5 pages (both the 1930s') in total. These figures are notable given that other foreign historical events are hardly described in all textbooks and the Fascist era is explained in the same number of pages in the late 1930s' edition. Historian Piergiorgio Genovesi points out that the Fascist schoolbooks are absolutely negative towards

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., pp. 129-38. Of course, it is very controversial (and might be erroneous) to call Julius II, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere and Emanuele Filiberto as patriots but this is one way in which Fascism manipulates history for its interest.



the French Revolution.<sup>216</sup> It is true that the book's overall assessment of the French Revolution, regardless its editions, is negative: the event is described as a bloodbaths, with "terrible carnage", and "cruel revenge" committed by the oppressed ruled classes.<sup>217</sup> However, what Genovesi overlooked is why the textbooks chose to devote so many words to these twenty six years rather than neglect them. In fact, the Fascist textbooks' attitude towards the French Revolution and the subsequent events is more complicated and ambivalent than it seems at a glance. Despite the generally negative view of France since 1789, there are some comments which imply a positive view on the event as well. For example, the 1940s' edition describes justifiable motivations of the popular uprising in 1789 –excessive social inequality, miserable living conditions of the people, intellectuals' desire for reforms etc.<sup>218</sup> More importantly, all editions of the book state Napoleon's positive impacts on Italy and Italians. The 1930s' text says:

"Napoleon I gave Italians hope of independence and unity, but then frustrated that hope. Nevertheless, there was progress. Various regions of the Peninsula had all received similar orders, which brought them closer [...]. Italians were called upon to participate in various governments and they had returned to the ancient warrior virtues and gave continuous evidence of it, fighting for Napoleon I, [...]. The soldiers of the Kingdom of Italy confronted death next to the beautiful three-coloured flag [...] which one day would become [...] the glorious flag of a resurgent Italy."<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> P. Genovesi, *Il manuale di storia*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>217</sup> "La rivoluzione continua ad **insanguinare** la Francia, strappando perfino dagli altari i simboli della religione. In nome della libertà si compiono **terribili carneficine e nefande vendette**."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 140. Or "L'anno 1789 ebbe principio in Francia una **terribile** rivoluzione. [...] La rivolta fu **sanguinosa e spietata**: il popolo insorse **massacrando** i nobili e i preti [...] bruciando case e castelli."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 141.

<sup>218</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 141.

<sup>219</sup> "Napoleone I aveva fatto balenare agl'Italiani la speranza dell'indipendenza e dell'unità, ma poi deluse quelle speranze. Tuttavia un progresso vi era stato. Le varie regioni della Penisola avevano tutte ricevuto ordinamenti simili, che le ravvicinavano [...]. Gli Italiani erano stati chiamati a far parte dei vari governi; e, cosa questa di grande importanza, essi erano ritornati alle antiche virtù guerriere e ne davano continua fulgida prova, combattendo per Napoleone I, [...]. I soldati del regno d'Italia affrontavano la morte stretti attorno alla bella bandiera dei tri colori [...] che un giorno doveva divenire, [...] la gloria bandiera dell'Italia risorta."; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), p. 144.

The later edition's author, without his own comment, uses a quotation from Gioacchino Volpe, which is read:

"He [Napoleon] united the Italians in a great hall in Lyon [...]: but a great kingdom of Italy took shape, which was composed of large parts of northern Italy, Romagna, and Marche [...]. And many Italians listened to him with good will [...]. Thus, there was an Italian Army and it was the core of the new Italy."<sup>220</sup>

The reception of Napoleon Bonaparte himself in the textbooks is also equivocal. All editions of the book mention Napoleon's abuse of Italy for the benefit of himself and France.<sup>221</sup> Nevertheless, their general tone remains sympathetic to him. Not only is his Italian origin stressed but also the French general is described as being "distinct" due to his "intelligence", "ability and energy" from his youth.<sup>222</sup> Napoleon's military triumphs (especially over Austria) are depicted in somewhat delighted or amazed tones and the 1930s' text does not conceal its pity for his final downfall and death.<sup>223</sup>

However, the Fascist regime perhaps sensed that despite some negative remarks, the coverage of the French Revolution and Napoleon in the textbooks was too positive and overshadowed its

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<sup>220</sup> "Egli [Napoleon] riunì gli italiani in una grande sala Lione [...]: ma un bel regno d'Italia si formò, che comprendeva gran parte dell'alta Italia, la Romagna, e le Marche [...]. E molti italiani gli diedero ascolto di buona voglia [...]. Così ci fu un esercito italiano e fu il nocciolo della nuova Italia."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 143. Though it is written that this paragraph is from Volpe, the textbook does not provide further information on the exact source of the quotation.

<sup>221</sup> "Ma purtroppo le ricchezze della Penisola, gli eroismi ed i sacrifici di sangue dei suoi figli andavano pur sempre a beneficio non della Patria italiana, ma di un Impero straniero [Napoleon's empire]."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 144. "Napoleone accettò i doni e gli applausi e pretese forti indennità di guerra e la cessione di molte opere d'arte: musei, chiese, piazze d'Italia furono spogliati per abbellire la Francia!"; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 142.

<sup>222</sup> "[...] si era distinto sempre per serietà ed intelligenza. Divenuto ufficiale di artiglieria, aveva mostrato la sua abilità ed energia nell'assedio di Tolone [...]."; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 142. For the comments on Napoleon's Italian origin, see *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 141 and *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 141.

<sup>223</sup> "[...] durante sei anni di dura prigionia, l'uomo che in cento battaglie aveva vinto [...], che aveva visto inchinarsi alla sua gloria i più potenti sovrani dell'Europa intera, visse di memorie e di rimpianti, triste e solitario, logorato dal clima malsano."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 146. Subtle admiration for Napoleon's military triumphs and rise to power is easily catchable in the languages of the narration; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 142-43 and *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 142-43.

argument of the 'pre-existing' Risorgimento in the early eighteenth century. In the 1930s' editions, four pages are devoted to the eighteenth century before 1789 but only two and a half pages of them are about the political situation in Italy with two patriotic episodes (Micca and Balilla). The rest are used to describe intellectual or reformist movements of the century.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, the last edition's author might have inserted the Siege of Turin and emphasised the continuity of Italian patriotic examples from earlier centuries to clarify the Risorgimento's autochthonous origins.

After the French Revolution and Napoleon, the textbooks exclusively focus on the Italians' struggle for independence and unification. The main pillars of the narrative are semi-hagiographic tales of patriots and war stories. We already know that the textbooks contain a lot of great men's stories from ancient history to the pre-Risorgimento and many of them are presented as patriots. The Risorgimento's biographic stories are different because the absolute majority of these stories highlight one particular virtue; sacrifice, sacrifice for the *Patria*. In the 1930s' books, there are sometimes stories of patriotic martyrs who are given separate subchapter; Ciriaco De' Amici, the Bandiera Brothers, the eleven martyrs of Belfiore, and the Cairoli Brothers, who all lost their lives or were seriously injured due to their patriotic activities.<sup>225</sup> This is exceptional treatment because all other men in these books between 1815 and 1870, except the so-called fathers of the *Patria* (Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour, Pope Pius IX, Vittorio Emanuele II) and King Carlo Alberto, are given no more than a few lines of comment.<sup>226</sup> Indeed, more influential or renowned historical figures like Gioberti, Cesare Balbo, Daniele Manin are barely mentioned by names.<sup>227</sup>

The Fascist schoolbooks, however, define not only risking one's life for the *Patria* as patriotic sacrifice or martyrdom but also selflessness or inexhaustible labour for the nation is described as virtuous sacrifice. At the end of the First War of Independence part, *Libro V classe* praises Carlo Alberto's voluntary abdication to obtain less harsh conditions in the peace talks as "a

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<sup>224</sup> *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 136–40.

<sup>225</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 217, 250–51, 276–77; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 150–51, 153, 168, 177–78.

<sup>226</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 213–78; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 147–80.

<sup>227</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 218–19, 226, 243; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 155–56, 166; Gioberti and Balbo are mentioned only once while Manin briefly appears twice. The textbook provides no biographic story of them at all.

sublime sacrifice for the sake of the Fatherland" calling him a "true martyr of Italy".<sup>228</sup> The description of Cavour's death too, underscores how hard the Piedmontese statesman worked for Italy and dramatises his death as if it was the last moment of a saint martyr:

"He was delirious, but his mind was still in conflict with the thought of the sacred cause for which he had consumed all of his energy, and more than once the names of Italy, Venice and Rome came from his parched lips. He died on the morning of 6 June, at the age of just 51."<sup>229</sup>

Equally, absolute obedience to the hierarchy is praised as sacrifice. Garibaldi's episode in the third War of Independence is a good example. In this tale, Garibaldi's victorious legion was about to chase fleeing enemy troops into the then Austrian territory Trentino but Vittorio Emanuele II ordered Garibaldi to stop advancing and to withdraw his men. Despite his agony and despair, the legendary hero followed the king's order with a simple word, "*Obbedisco* (I obey)".<sup>230</sup> This is a popular story for many liberals and became a famous myth before the *Ventennio*. Nevertheless, there is a difference. Whilst liberals use this episode to underline Garibaldi's loyalty to the king and respect for the monarch's authority, Fascists not only emphasise the virtues of discipline and loyalty but also sanctify absolute obedience as a sacrificial act in this story. For example, after explaining this episode, the author reminds the children that:

"[I] Obey! [The] sacred and beautiful word that you, boys and girls of Italy, must always know how to utter, even if it means a painful sacrifice."<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> "Poche ore dopo prendeva la via dell'esilio, compiendo così, vero martire d'Italia, un sublime sacrificio per amore della Patria."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 160.

<sup>229</sup> "Delirava, ma gli stava pur sempre confitto nella mente il pensiero della santa causa, per la quale aveva logorato le sue energie, e più di una volta i nomi d'Italia, di Venezia, di Roma suonarono sulle sue labbra riarse. La mattina del 6 giugno egli spirò, a soli 51 anni."; *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>230</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 274; *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 124; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 91; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 176-77; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 167.

<sup>231</sup> "Obbedisco! Sacra e bella parola che voi pure, fanciulli e fanciulle d'Italia, dovete sempre sapere pronunciare, anche se vi debba costare una dolorosa rinuncia."; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 91.

Along with the rhetoric of sacrifice, there is another narrative tool designed to invoke emotional effects in the biographic stories of the Risorgimento; letters. The 1930s' textbooks show the children Menotti's last letter to his wife and the Bandiera Brothers' correspondence to their father. The former is exceptionally long (1 ½ pages –far longer than the story of Menotti's plot itself) but both letters are sentimental and full of patriotic messages.<sup>232</sup> The point is that the *Libro unico di Stato* makes patriots' episodes seem like semi-hagiographies by employing the rhetoric of sacrifice and by presenting emotional materials such as family letters. This is different to Fascism's appropriation of the Risorgimento history. Although the regime appeared to just repeat the same repertoires utilised by liberal patriotism or nationalism, it adopted different narrative methods and placed a large emphasis on sacrifice (martyrdom, enduring labour and physical suffering) –a crucial moral value for ideal Fascist men and women.<sup>233</sup>

If the biographic stories represent the emotional and pseudo-religious side of patriotism in Fascist interpretation of the Risorgimento, the accounts of the Unification process in the textbooks illustrate the regime's efforts to promote militarism. This study has demonstrated the centrality of militarism or military values in the Fascist textbook's ancient, medieval and Renaissance history. The narrative on the Risorgimento and the subsequent century is even more extreme. Military campaigns and armed conflicts dominate the Risorgimento history in all editions and the nation's unification process is centred on this theme. The Wars of Independence, armed uprisings in Milan, Venice, Rome and Brescia, the Crimean War, Carlo Pisacane's and Garibaldi's expeditions, and the Capture of Rome account for the majority of the textbook's pages from 1815 to 1870.<sup>234</sup> It is no doubt that popular revolts, armed resistances and Wars of Independence were important parts in the process of the Italian unification. Yet, the *Libro unico's* Risorgimento hardly explains any socio-cultural aspects of the process in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>232</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 217 and *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 67 (the Bandieras). *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 150–51 (Menotti).

<sup>233</sup> Some recent studies point out that sacrifice was a crucial moral value in the Fascist project to construct a new man. See Chiara Ferrari, *The Rhetoric of Violence and Sacrifice in Fascist Italy: Mussolini, Gadda, Vittorini* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013), pp. 4–5, 15; Kate Ferris, *Everyday Life in Fascist Venice, 1929–40* (Basingstoke: Palgravemacmillan, 2012), pp. 56–76; Mimmo Franzinelli, 'Guerra e fascismo: la violenza squadrista', in *La prima guerra mondiale*, p. 581.

<sup>234</sup> These topics occupy 20 out of 34 pages on the mentioned period in *Libro V classe* (1932/7), 13 out of 24 in *Libro V classe* (1941), 43 out of 68 in *Libro III classe* (1932/7) and 12.5 out of 24 *Libro III classe* (1941).

Unlike the preceding part of the medieval-Renaissance history, the textbooks do not have a separate subchapter on the great men of culture in the Risorgimento. Many key figures in Italian culture at the time, Gioachino Rossini, Antonio Canova, Foscolo, Hayez, Giacomo Leopardi and even Verdi, are absent or cited by only names. Also there is no explanation of the role of music, literature and art in the development of the Italian national consciousness.<sup>235</sup> Only a few cultural figures are mentioned, not because of their cultural activities, but because of their involvements in patriotic deeds such as the Carbonari plot, the neo-Guelph movement or battles in the Risorgimento.<sup>236</sup>

If heroism of sacrifice with emotional effects and the centrality of militarism show salient narrative features of the Fascism's Risorgimento historiography, images of the fathers of the *Patria* in the textbook testify that the regime's use of history was by no means immune from the existing myths and receptions of the greatest national heroes. For instance, the *Libro unico* presents Mazzini as the initiator of popular participation in the Risorgimento and an undisputable proponent of the nation's united struggle for liberty:

"In order to win, it was above all necessary that the Italians gathered all of their energy in a united and harmonious effort from the Alps to the Islands. A great Genoese man, Giuseppe Mazzini, understood that only unity would make victory possible."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> The only exception is this sentence; "[...] per liberare la Patria, bisognava che un principe italiano scendesse in campo col suo esercito contro il forte e aumeroso esercito austriaco , e lo vincessse [...]. Gli scrittori che abbiamo ricordato cercarono di diffondere questa verità. Essi volevano persuadere di due cose i principi che regnavano in Italia: concedere maggiori libertà ai propri sudditi; aiutare con le proprie milizie quello di essi, che si fosse assunto il maggior peso dela prima guerra per la ricossa nazionale."; *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 219-20. Even this comment, though telling about the Risorgimento writers' contribution to awaken the national consciousness, evaluates the role of literature only from the military-centric and pro-Savoy monarchist view.

<sup>236</sup> The notable names mentioned are as follows; Silvio Pellico, Manzoni, D'Azeglio, Gioberti, Balbo, Goffredo Mameli, Alessandro Poerio Giuseppe Giusti, Arnaldo Fusinato. See *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 214, 218-20, 240-41; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 77-78; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 148-49, 154-55, 164-65; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 148.

<sup>237</sup> "Per vincere era anzitutto necessario che gl'Italiani riunissero tutte le loro energie in uno sforzo unico e concorde dalle Alpi alle Isole. Un grande genovese, Giuseppe Mazzini, ebbe il merito di comprendere che solo l'unità avrebbe reso possibile la vittoria."; *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 215.

"He [Mazzini] was convinced that the Carbonari would never achieve their goals because the people did not participate in it. He therefore founded a new association, Young Italy, which [...] wanted to bring together all the forces of the Italian people [...]."<sup>238</sup>

On the other hand, the textbook never cites his intransigent republicanism and hostile conflicts with many Italian monarchs including the Savoyes. Thus, Fascism's Mazzini in the schoolbook is a combination of the populist-democrat's cult of him and the Liberal state's myth of the Genovese as the apostle of the nation's unity.

There is also no distinction between the images of Vittorio Emanuele II and Cavour in the textbook from the conventional myths. The king is portrayed as a fearless commander in battles, a dignified leader and the father-like sovereign for his people.<sup>239</sup> Moreover, the book states, as typical liberal myths do, that he was always "loyal and faithful to the idea of the Fatherland's unification and independence," despite the fact that the Savoyes had never been enthusiastic in proving their Italianness.<sup>240</sup> Likewise, Cavour is praised due to his tireless service for the nation "with his visionary genius (*col suo genio lungimirante*)" in diplomacy – the identical way in which the count was conceived in the Liberal state's official presentations.<sup>241</sup>

Garibaldi's description in the *Libro unico* is rather more complicated. Again, Fascism selectively accepted various existing images of Garibaldi which had been shaped not only by the Liberal state but also by its radical democratic opponents; a popular and romantic hero, a liberator of the oppressed people, a man of action, a brave patriotic soldier, and a disciplined

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<sup>238</sup> "Egli [Mazzini] si era convinto che la Carboneria non avrebbe mai raggiunto gli scopi che si proponeva, perchè non vi partecipava il popolo. Fondò quindi una nuova associazione, la Giovine Italia, la quale [...] doveva riunire in un fascio tutte le forze del popolo italiano [...]."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 152–53. Mazzini told in the later edition is almost the same; refer to *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 70–71 and *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 150–51.

<sup>239</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 245–46; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 94; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 161 and 180.

<sup>240</sup> "Valoroso in guerra, di grande abilità nel governo, ma soprattutto leale e fedele all'idea della unità e della indipendenza della Patria,"; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 161. On the fabricated myth of the king's loyalty to Italianness in Liberal Italy, see Duggan, 'Political cults', pp. 15 and 23.

<sup>241</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 247–48; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 81–82; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 166–67; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 160–61. The quotation is in *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 167.

revolutionary. The school textbooks reflected all of these features,<sup>242</sup> but some of those images are emphasised more than others in accordance with the regime's ideological needs. For example, each edition of the third and fifth grader *Libro unico* tells the Garibaldi's "*obbedisco*" episode in the third War of Independence.<sup>243</sup> This legendary story was a typical telling of the liberal Risorgimento account of 'Garibaldi, disciplined revolutionary'. The Fascist regime repeated it because absolute or sacrificial obedience (in the sense that one gives up anything in order to follow the order) to the hierarchy was one of the core moral behaviours that Fascism wanted to teach children.

Certainly, however, the Fascist presentation of Garibaldi is not a mere repetition of the existing myths. Fascism added two dimensions into the inherited images of the hero; 'Garibaldi *il condottiero*' and 'Garibaldi the dictator'. For Fascism, *condottiero* is synonymous not only with a brave and excellent mercenary captain but also with a charismatic military leader. So, Garibaldi is one of the very few historical figures in the Fascist textbook whose physical appearance is described along with a full-length portrait. The description endows him with the image of a romantic and charismatic war hero:

"Giuseppe Garibaldi was beautiful in appearance and in personality. How many times will you have seen him portrayed with his characteristic round hat, flowing hair, blonde like his beard, wrapped in a poncho, [...] under which a red shirt can be glimpsed [...]. With blazing eyes and a powerful voice, when the battle was raging, he led everyone to be more daring and to victory. This [is] the leader who defended Rome in 1849."<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 239–41, 263–66, 269, 274–76; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 85–89, 91; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 162–65, 172–73, 176–77, 180; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 155–56, 163–65, 167–69.

<sup>243</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 274; *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 124; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 91; *Libro V classe* (1932/7), pp. 176–77; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 167.

<sup>244</sup> "Giuseppe Garibaldi fu bellissimo di viso e di persona. Quante volte lo avrete visto ritratto col caratteristico cappellino tondo, con i capelli fluenti, biondi come la barba, avvolto nel poncho, [...] sotto in quale s'intravede la rossa camicia [...]. Con gli occhi fiammeggianti, la voce possente, quando infuriava la battaglia, trascinava tutti ai maggiori ardimenti ed alla vittoria. Questo il condottiero che difese Roma nel 1849."; *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 240 and *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 90.



Many Fascists were eager to stress the myth of 'Garibaldi, the dictator'. Journalist Ugo D'Andrea argued that "dictatorship in the difficult moments" was the motive for Garibaldi's actions.<sup>245</sup> Similarly, Francesco Ercole, criticising liberal's 'false' concept of liberty based upon parliamentary democracy, insisted that real national freedom relied on the "heroic activity of the dictator" for the collective interests which coincided with Garibaldi's belief in the "necessity of dictatorship in the name of the people".<sup>246</sup> Mussolini expressed the same idea. In his famous speech at the inauguration of Anita Garibaldi's statue in June 1932, the Duce said that Garibaldi disdained any kind of factionalism and was a "proponent of the unlimited dictatorship in hard times" who "neither compromised nor abandoned" such an idea.<sup>247</sup> Undoubtedly, this portrayal of 'the dictator Garibaldi' was a bid to justify Mussolini's dictatorship by conjuring up parallels between the two men. Yet, in general, the regime was cautious to present this myth on official occasions because, as Mario Isnenghi pointed out, it could also jeopardise the already uneasy relationship between Mussolini and the Savoy king. By depicting the dictator's image as a delegate of the nation's collective interests and will, the myth could further threaten the presence of the monarch who has been overshadowed and marginalised by the Duce in his institutional role during the *Ventennio*.<sup>248</sup> So, even the Garibaldi Exhibition, organised by the Fascist government on the fiftieth anniversary of his death (1932), displayed only a few documents to remind visitors of the hero's dictatorship in Sicily.<sup>249</sup> There is no difference in the school textbooks; the direct phrase 'Garibaldi, the dictator' is found only once in all of the *Libro unico*'s different editions:

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<sup>245</sup> Ugo D'Andrea, 'Il Garibaldinismo nel Fascismo', *Critica fascista*, 7, no. 2 (1929), 43-44 (quotation in p. 43).

<sup>246</sup> Ercole, 'Garibaldi' in his *Pensatori e uomini*, pp. 278-96 (quotations in p. 287).

<sup>247</sup> "Uomini, sette, partiti, ideologie e declamazioni di assemblee, le quali ultime Garibaldi disdegnò, propugnatore come Egli era delle 'illimitatissime' dittature, nei tempi difficili, mai lo piegarono né distolsero da questa meta suprema."; Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. 8, p. 60.

<sup>248</sup> Isnenghi, 'Garibaldi' in *I luoghi della: personaggi*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>249</sup> Though a thousand of artefacts (letters, documents, paintings, photographs, weaponry, costumes, medals, etc.) were displayed in the exhibition, there were less than a dozen of documents which Garibaldi officially issued in the name of Vittorio Emanuele II's delegate and dictator in Sicily or in which he just signed his name with the title, '*dittatore*'. See the exhibition's official catalogue book; La commissione della Mostra garibaldina, *Mostra garibaldina: 50° anniversario della morte di Giuseppe Garibaldi, Palazzo delle esposizioni: catalogo* (Rome: [n. pub.], 1932), pp. 61-65.

"Giuseppe Garibaldi, who proclaimed himself *dictator* in the name of Vittorio Emanuele II, had thus landed in Sicily with a handful of men [...]." <sup>250</sup>

As for the images and myths of Italy's founding fathers, there is another noteworthy point in the Fascist cult. Like the Liberal state's official historiography, Fascist schoolbooks hide or minimise the tension and discord between these great men and mythicise the Unification as the achievement of their 'harmonious' efforts. The *Libro unico* not only avoids mentioning Mazzini's opposition to the Savoy but also conceals conflicts between Garibaldi and Cavour on the cession of Nice to France and on the Expedition to Sicily. On the other hand, one edition of the textbook falsely claims that Cavour "confidentially favoured" Garibaldi's Sicilian enterprise.<sup>251</sup> Besides, all editions of the book, with a large painting of the scene, exalt Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II's meeting at Teano in which the hero hailed the king and unconditionally handed over the conquered South to him.<sup>252</sup> Conclusively, in the closing paragraph of the Unification the late 1930s' *libro V classe* remarks that:

"These great men [Mazzini, Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi], who had made the Italian Risorgimento their only reason for living, could go to their graves [feeling] rightly proud of themselves and the people who [...], had followed them, offering martyrs and heroes to the Fatherland."<sup>253</sup>

In the pre-unification historiography, it is undeniable that there are certain degrees of continuity between liberalism and Fascism in terms of repertoires, topics, messages and metaphor although they sometimes have different focal points and narrative approaches. However, Fascist textbook's post-unification history rarely bears any similarity with the liberal counterparts. The reason is simple; for Fascists, the nation's fifty years under liberalism is nothing but an 'old/bad Italy', an aberration from *Italianità*. As it did for the Reformation and

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<sup>250</sup> "Giuseppe Garibaldi, che si proclamò *dittatore* in nome di Vittorio Emanuele II, aveva così messo piedi in Sicilia con un pugno di uomini [...]."; *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 113 (Italic from the original).

<sup>251</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 174.

<sup>252</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 266; *Libro III classe* (1937), p. 116; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 89; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 174; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 164.

<sup>253</sup> "Questi Grandi, che avevano fatto unico scopo della propria vita il Risorgimento d'Italia, potevano scendere nella tomba giustamente orgogliosi di sè e del popolo che, [...], li aveva seguiti offrendo alla Patria martiri ed eroi."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 180-81.

other unfavourable eras, the Fascist regime preferred not to talk about Liberal Italy in the schoolbook rather than explained its failings.

Overall, the Fascist textbooks ignore most of the events in Liberal Italy between the deaths of 'the fathers of *Patria*' and 1914. Regardless of the edition and the grade, stories of the royal family, Italy's colonial wars (with episodes of war heroes) and nationalistic themes totally dominate this period in the books; there is no description of other cultural, economic, social and political aspects in the country.<sup>254</sup> Exceptionally, only the 1940s' fifth grader inserts a quote from Volpe which positively depicts the rapid progress in the economy, social infrastructure, civil engineering works and industry. However, the book seems to attribute these achievements to Umberto I's merit rather than the liberal government's leadership; as this account is narrated under the heading, "the reign of Umberto I" and there is not a single remark on the parliamentary government's role in this part.<sup>255</sup> To summarise, the *Libro unico*'s treatment of Liberal Italy reveals the main messages in the regime's appropriation of history; Italy's imperial destiny, militaristic virtues and disciplined 'citizen-soldier' Italians as the Fascist new men. In this regard, during over a half-century of liberalism, only 'righteous' but troubled attempts to be an empire (with demonstrations of the nation's militancy) and the 'respectable' monarchs fit into this Fascist agenda.

The account of World War I in the textbooks again displays some similarities with liberal historiographies. As the liberal government's wartime propaganda did, the Fascist schoolbooks justify Italy's involvement in the war as an inevitable choice to "finalise the Unification" and to "redeem the provinces that are still under the Austrian rule".<sup>256</sup> One edition even entitles the chapter on the Great War as "LA QUARTA GUERRA D'INDIPENDENZA (The Fourth War of Independence)".<sup>257</sup> Likewise, all versions of the *Libro unico* share the liberal's myth of the united heroic war efforts by Italians. They unequivocally explain that the nation willingly endured hardships and proved its bravery and heroism from the battlefield to the home front, but omit any sign of wartime agitations such as military desertions, food riots, strikes, and anti-war

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<sup>254</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 281-90; *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 131-40; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 95-100; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 181-86; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 170-74.

<sup>255</sup> *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 170-71.

<sup>256</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 187 and *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 175; quotations from the latter.

<sup>257</sup> *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 100.

protests.<sup>258</sup> In addition, the disaster of Caporetto is depicted as a heroic retreat, not a defeat, of the outnumbered Italian Army by the enemy. It also claims that despite the loss Italy “retained its high morale” and the “exemplary internal concord”; there was no panic, no political dispute, no defeatism.<sup>259</sup> Even the myth of the ‘soldier-king’ –not so successful wartime propaganda– is embraced in the Fascist text:

“Our King [Vittorio Emanuele III], [...], the noblest example of courage and love of the fatherland, shared the hardship, danger, and discomfort of the war with his soldiers.”<sup>260</sup>

Nonetheless, the Great War, as told by the Fascist schoolbook, is not identical with the liberal government’s presentation. First, in the *Libro unico*’s account, there is no reference to the liberal government’s leadership. According to the book, Italy’s entry into the conflict is led by the people, Interventionists and the monarch, not by the Government. It is argued that Interventionists, especially D’Annunzio and Mussolini, ‘correctly’ interpreted and guided public opinions, and made the king recognise his people’s will to fight:

“Our people had understood that it was the time to seize the unredeemed land from Austrian control, and had called for the declaration of war on Austria with vibrant enthusiasm. [...] Benito Mussolini [...] lit up the spirits with his word and writings of ardent patriotism. Gabriele D’Annunzio [...] drew crowds with his oratory. [...] Our King became the interpreter of popular will, and declared war on Austria on 24th May 1915.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 292–309; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 101–13; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 187–93; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175–80.

<sup>259</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 189–90 and *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 298–99; quotations from the latter.

<sup>260</sup> “Il nostro Re, [...], nobilissimo esempio di coraggio e di amor di patria, condivise coi soldati le durezze, i pericoli, ed i disagi della guerra.”; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 188.

<sup>261</sup> “Il nostro popolo aveva compreso che era giunta l’ora di strappare al giogo austriaco le terre irredente, e con vibrante entusiasmo aveva chiesto che si dichiarasse guerra all’Austria. [...] Benito Mussolini [...] accendeva gli animi con la parola e con gli scritti ardenti di patriottismo. Gabriele D’Annunzio [...] trascinava le folle con la sua eloquenza. [...] Il nostro Re si rese interprete della volontà popolare, ed il 24 maggio 1915 intimò guerra all’Austria.”; *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 292.

During the war years as well, existence of the liberal government is constantly ignored in the text. The High Command of the Army and the king is said to have led Italy's war efforts, and no member of the wartime cabinets appears at all, including Leonida Bissolati who was famously volunteered for the front in his 50s' and later became the ammunitions-military supply minister.<sup>262</sup> Instead, many parts of the account in the *terza classe* are filled with heroic tales of soldiers like Cesare Battisti, Nazario Sauro, Enrico Toti, and Mussolini, who are defined not only as heroes and patriots but also as 'martyrs'.<sup>263</sup> Hence, the textbook indicates that it was the masses, the Army, and the king, not the parliamentary government or its liberal bourgeois ruling class, who initiated, led, fought, and won the war.

Another disparate view of Fascism can be found in the account of the post-war period. All books of the *Libro unico* brand the post-war liberal government as "cowardly", "timorous", "feeble" and "inadequacy" condemning it for the failure to obtain the whole of Dalmatia and for the expulsion of D'Annunzio from Fiume.<sup>264</sup> They also accuse the liberal government of letting subversives and communists become the "real masters of Italy" by just looking at their anti-national activities or "deleterious propaganda".<sup>265</sup> Therefore, from the Fascist point of view, the post-war Italy was far from fulfilment of the Risorgimento. The victory of the war, textbooks conclude, neither brought territorial and internal unity of the nation, nor did the dream of 'great' Italy matching up to Britain, France or the US materialise. On the contrary, the nation plunged into "a terrible abyss"<sup>266</sup> because:

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<sup>262</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 291-310, 312-17; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 100-13; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 187-93; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175-81. All these books include photos of the king and the two wartime Chief Commanders of the Army (Luigi Cadorna, Armando Diaz) but show none of the Prime Ministers.

<sup>263</sup> In the 1930s' text, these men's stories are told in the section titled "The Italian martyrs and heroes in the Great War" which contains Sauro's letter to his family; *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 312-17 or *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 162-67. The latter edition and a fifth grader encompass D'Annunzio and others instead of Mussolini; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 108-13; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 175-79.

<sup>264</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 311; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 114; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 194; *Libro V classe* (1941), p. 181; quotations in due order.

<sup>265</sup> "Il Governo di allora non si oppose a questa propaganda deleteria, e perciò divennero i veri padroni d'Italia."; *Libro III classe* (1932), p. 318.

<sup>266</sup> "L'Italia era sul'orlo di un terribile baratro."; Ibid.

"[...] instead, some painful years followed, in which Italy seemed condemned to end up in the horrors of the most unbridled anarchy."<sup>267</sup>

This is the Fascist version of the 'incomplete Risorgimento' whose biggest difference from the liberal equivalent is its view on the consequence of World War I. By depicting the post-war Italy in a status of total anarchy, Fascism judges the Liberal state unworthy to rule the nation and justifies the March on Rome of the black shirts as a necessary action to save Italy. Indeed, in the accounts on the rise of Fascism and its 1922 coup, the *Libro unico* proclaims that "Italy was saved by Benito Mussolini" (with his Fascist squads) who "dedicated himself to the sacred mission to rekindle the virtues" of the Risorgimento and the Great War.<sup>268</sup> Accordingly, in this interpretation, Fascism becomes a legitimate heir of the Risorgimento and heroism in the Great War. Following the pages on Mussolini and the March on Rome, one textbook thus states several names of "Fascist martyrs" (Giulio Giordani, Giovanni Berta, Emilio Tonoli etc.) and associates them with the dead in World War I:

"Along with the fallen from the Great War, the fascist dead show us [...] the will to be great, which gives life to all of our nation."<sup>269</sup>

Predictably, final pages of the *Libro unico*, in most of the editions, are filled with the Fascist government's achievements. Unlike their treatment of the liberal era, the Fascist textbooks not only devote a lot of space to praise the regime's enterprises but also are keen to update them edition by edition. The first edition of the textbook boasts of the restoration of social order, the Lateran Pact, various reclamations, welfare policies and 'harmonious' settlement of labour disputes under the Fascist Corporations.<sup>270</sup> The late 1930s' version passionately adds at length

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<sup>267</sup> "[...] seguirono invece alcuni tristissimi anni, nei quali l'Italia parve condannata a finire miseramente negli orrori della più sfrenata anarchia."; *Libro V classe* (1937), p. 194.

<sup>268</sup> "L'Italia fu salvata da Benito Mussolini. [...] si dedicò, [...] alla santa missione di ridestare nel popolo italiano quelle virtù, che già ne avevano reso possibile il risorgimento, prima, la vittoria nella grande guerra mondiale, poi."; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 195-97 (quotation in p. 195).

<sup>269</sup> "Insieme coi Caduti nella Grande guerra, i Caduti fascisti ci dimostrano [...] la volontà di grandezza, che anima tutta la nostra Nazione."; *Libro III classe* (1941), p. 119.

<sup>270</sup> *Libro III classe* (1932), pp. 322-26; *Libro V classe* (1932), pp. 196-98.

Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and foundation of the Fascist Empire (with a quotation from Mussolini's official declaration speech), while the 1940s' edition updates the account with Italy's involvement in the Spanish Civil War, annexation of Albania, and entry into World War II on the side of Nazi Germany.<sup>271</sup> It is evident, from the words in the books, why the authors recount the recent history in such extraordinary detail; to demonstrate that Italy was "radically transformed" into the "disciplined and harmonious" country and "became a great power" under Fascism.<sup>272</sup> These statements of Fascism's achievements are propaganda because bringing a bright future to Italy was the regime's promise. However, they are at the same time the final piece of jigsaw puzzle in the Fascist historiography which reads the nation's past as a constant struggle between the Two Italies in the continuity-discontinuity dichotomy but ends in the ultimate victory of the 'good' side-*Romanità*, *Italianità*, Risorgimento, and Fascism.

In history, the Fascist textbooks aim to demonstrate the Italian nation's spiritual and moral superiority, and to claim it as the genesis of Fascism. This intention leads to highlighting the greatness of the Roman Empire or *Romanità* in ancient history and to stress *Italianità* in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and pre-modern history. Yet *Italianità* itself is vaguely defined and therefore any discussion of Italianness sways inconsistently between various themes; Catholicism, will of freedom, creative or innovative spirit, adventurousness, bravery, and love of the *Patria*. From the Risorgimento onwards, however, the narrative focus converges on one point, i.e., patriotism and the textbooks rely on heroism and the rhetoric of sacrifice as the tangible evidence to testify the nation's patriotic nature.

It is true that Fascism adopted various elements of patriotism and heroism from the liberal practice in its use of the Risorgimento history. Many symbolic images, commemorated events, worshipped heroes and their related episodes were formed and discussed in Liberal Italy. Even the cult of 'fathers of the *Patria*' and the patriotic death were invented in post-unification Italy, or at least the age of Risorgimento itself. Nevertheless, the Fascist discourse on the Risorgimento (and onwards) is not a simple imitation of the liberal precedent. Fascism used history in accordance with its own political motivations –legitimising the regime and cultivating Fascist new men/women- which the schoolbooks undoubtedly reflect in the historiography of this period. A different way of periodisation, metaphor of sacrifice with Fascist ideal virtues,

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<sup>271</sup> *Libro III classe* (1937), pp. 177-80; *Libro III classe* (1941), pp. 126-27; *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 199-204; *Libro V classe* (1941), pp. 188-93.

<sup>272</sup> *Libro V classe* (1937), pp. 197, 205; quotations in both pages.

selective use of heroes' images (especially Mazzini and Garibaldi), deliberate indifference to the Liberal era, identification of the Fascist squadristi with Interventionists or heroes in the Great War, and the myth of 'incomplete' Risorgimento even after the war, are all Fascist devices used in the *Libro unico's* account. They somehow reflect the five main narrative frameworks of Fascist historiography; Italy's destiny to be a 'civilising' empire, the Two Italies thesis, continuity-discontinuity of Italianness, the cult of heroism and the utopian vision for the nation's future.

## Conclusion

Fascism presented itself as an inevitable and correct consequence of the nation's historical evolution. For this purpose, the regime's historiography sought to define Italy's past great achievements and glorious moments as testimony to genuine Italianness which was identified with Fascism. The *Libro unico di Stato* is a synthetic but concise narrative which demonstrates such an approach. From ancient to modern, various things, either factual or mythical, are claimed as the essence of *Italianità* in the textbook; the Roman Empire and its contribution to 'civilise' the world, Catholicism and the Church's role to save civilisation, independence of medieval Italian communes, glories of Italian maritime republics, cultural, scientific, economic and technological genius in the Renaissance, Italian people's adventurous spirit, military virtues, patriotic nature, and the morality of heroic sacrifice and so on. All of these, according to the schoolbook, are the ideological-spiritual inspiration, predecessor, and foundation of Fascism.

It might sound that this narrative historiography crudely uses everything available to confirm Italy's greatness by just repeating the already established practices and discourses. Yet, this is not true. As this chapter has demonstrated, the *Libro unico's* narrative history is, in many ways, the outcome of complex strategic selections (or exclusions), presentations, revisions, and compositions of topics, messages, rhetoric, languages, metaphor, and periodisations which are not only the continuations of some conventional historiographies but also reflections of the Fascism's own perspective. Indeed, it is not difficult to see that the textbook accounts purposefully over-emphasised or neglected, and sometimes falsified various historical facts, events, figures, and even periods in accordance with the Fascist view of the past; Italy's historical mission to be the Empire of the civiliser, dichotomies of 'Two Italies', tropes of historical continuity-discontinuity, the cult of heroes (and the Duce), and utopianism. We have seen numerous examples of this through the close reading of the text; parallel stresses on the



anarchy in Republican Rome and post-war Italy, arbitrary periodizations of the Renaissance and the Risorgimento, remarks on the selective images or virtues of fathers of the *Patria*, ignorance of topics like the racial integration/segregation in the late Roman Empire, Reformation-Counter Reformation, the Papal state's misgovernment and democratic parliamentary governments in Liberal Italy etc.

However, this is not to say that Fascist historiography in the textbook is perfectly persuasive or appealing. On the contrary, as this chapter has often pointed out, there are some problems with the plausibility and consistency of arguments and with the pedagogical quality of the textbook's narrative. Yet, no matter how persuasive and successful it was, what is important is that the state schoolbook introduced by the Fascist government was intentionally designed and written to serve the regime's two main aims in the use of history; to legitimise Fascism (with its rule of the country) in the historical context, and to imbue schoolchildren with the Fascist national identity.

# Conclusion

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The unification of Italy was a dramatic event which the development of cultural-political nationalism in Europe produced in the nineteenth century. However, the creation of the unified nation-state in Italy did not complete national integration. Italy had not been unified under a single ruler since the fall of the Roman Empire. So, it was unrealistic to expect that all the different traditions, customs, identities, cultures, mentalities and languages amongst the regions to be quickly subdued and for all the people in the peninsula to become a well-harmonised nation immediately after political unification. Thus, the new-born Kingdom of Italy had to cope with the difficult challenge of cementing fragile national integration, and at the same time, of modernising itself quickly to prevent it falling victim again to the power struggle between other stronger European countries. For this reason, education became one of the most urgent priorities for the government of Liberal Italy. Better and more provision of schooling was expected, not only to supply a quality workforce for the country's industrialisation by teaching the vast number of poor people reading, writing and arithmetic, but also to inculcate national identity in the masses who were still mainly apathetic or ignorant of the sense of nationhood. As a result, from the early years of post-unification, history was, along with Italian language and literature, regarded as a core subject to teach at schools and the nationalist concern for history education gradually increased its impact on school textbooks.

Yet the progress was slow and unsatisfactory. In the eyes of liberalism's critics especially, the government's investment in public education looked poor, Italy still had a higher rate of illiteracy than its neighbours even fifty years after the unification, and the consciousness of Italianness and the pride of the nationhood were not yet firmly implanted into the masses. In addition, the mutation of nationalism since the end of nineteenth century raised more discontent with the liberal government's commitment to public education; with mounting pressure from competition between imperialist countries, nationalism in Europe and Italy increasingly became chauvinistic or aggressively jingoistic. Consequently, the demand for more patriotic content in education became louder and continued to grow in Italy during the experiences of World War I and the severe socio-political conflicts in the post-war era.

Fascism came to power at this moment. All Fascist leaders had been born and educated in post-unification Italy and, as such, liberal principles and practices in education to some extent

influenced on their thoughts and mind. On the other hand, they were also deeply affected by critics of the country's lagging progress under liberalism, imperialistic fervour, and the chauvinistic turn in nationalism. The Great War and its aftermath convinced them, like many other contemporaries, that liberal parliamentary democracy failed in Italy and public education was one of the fields in which the liberal regime's failure was evident. Thus, it was not a coincidence that the reform of education was one of the acts which the Fascist government launched as soon as it came to power. However, the Fascist regime's first education reform, the so-called Gentile Reform, was not truly Fascist in its nature. As many scholars point out, it was rather a conservative liberal programme. Hence, the Gentile Reform was much opposed or criticised by many Fascist leaders and was almost annulled by a series of amendments after Giovanni Gentile's resignation as the Minister of Public Education.<sup>1</sup> As such, if we probe Fascist education –what Fascism has done in education, why and how–, it is more suitable and effective to examine school textbooks, not reform programmes or bills. The Fascist regime attempted to control what was taught in schools from its very first year in power and the textbook was at the centre of the regime's attention. Mussolini's regime first imposed self-censorship on private textbook publishers by bringing all existing schoolbooks under the government's approval, and eventually monopolised the textbook production when this indirect control seemed unable to guarantee a 'satisfactory' quality. Behind this change of policy, as explained in the Introduction of this thesis, there was a general dissatisfaction with existing history textbooks among the Fascist leaders and educators.

Unlike communism, Fascism lacked its own elaborate philosophical theory. Instead, for Fascists ideologues, history functioned as a main ideological tool to preach and propagate Fascism. That is why numerous Fascist political debates, public ceremonies, monuments and speeches were centred on discourses or presentations of historical events and figures. History was even more important subject in Fascist education because its primary aim was to teach Fascist values and to instil the Fascist spirit into all Italians. Nino Sammartano, enthusiastic educator and the author of several books for Fascist youth organisations in the *Ventennio*, aptly summarised the ideal role of schools and 'enlightened' historical knowledge expected in Fascist Italy:

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<sup>1</sup> Borghi, *Educazione e autorità*, pp. 245–64; Enricomaria Corbi and Vincenzo Sarracino, *Scuola e politiche educative in Italia dall'unità a oggi* (Naples: Liguori, 2003), pp. 54–59; Maria Bellucci and Michele Ciliberto, *La scuola e la pedagogia del fascismo* (Turin: Loescher, 1978), pp. 30–35; Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, pp. 55–59.

"The Fascist spirit must be brought into schools [...] who know how to form not only men of culture but also men of character, who know how to impose discipline and rules on themselves, who know [...] how to meditate on the past in order to look to the present and the future. [...] The roads which lead to the new Italian, dreamed of by Mussolini, are found in schools."<sup>2</sup>

So, how did the Fascist government change history textbooks? What did Fascism teach in its own version of the history text? To what extent was the Fascist schoolbook different from (or similar to) liberal history education? These are the questions that this thesis has answered through the analysis of historiography in the *Libro unico di Stato*.

Although Fascism and liberal nationalism have a common proclivity to see history as a useful and essential medium to educate 'desirable' citizens, their definitions of desirability are not the same. While liberals saw a law-abiding, responsible but autonomous citizen as ideal, Fascists believed in loyal (to the regime), brave, hardy, obedient and sacrificial citizen-soldiers or citizen-mothers as perfect members of the nation. Accordingly, Fascism required a different (from liberalism) role model in history and the Fascist history textbook claimed different images of men and women as the epitome of the nationhood. So, the *Libro unico* in numerous occasions portrayed disciplined, frugal, laborious, creative, tenacious, courageous, patriotic, and heroically sacrificial figures in history as the incarnation of *Italianità*. Of course, the *Libro unico* was not the first example of these figures or virtues being hailed. Many of those great men's traits had been praised as part of the national character in countless historical discussions and presentations since the age of the Risorgimento. It is, however, not to say that the Fascist textbook just copied the liberal nationalist appropriation of history and had nothing particular to offer. On the contrary, this thesis has demonstrated that the Fascist schoolbook was made with careful consideration and clear intention so that it had salient features in its narrative strategies, thematic concerns, periodizations, and the use of rhetoric.

Historiography in the *Libro unico* is based upon or built around the following notions: 'Nation as a creation of the human will', 'historical continuity / discontinuity of Fascism', 'inevitable

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<sup>2</sup> "Bisogna portare nella scuola lo spirito fascista, [...] che sappia formare oltre che uomini colti, uomini di carattere, che sappiano imporsi una disciplina e una norma di vita, che sappiano [...] meditare sul passato per guardare [...] il presente e l'avvenire. [...] Le vie che portano all'italiano nuovo, sognato da Mussolini, sono nella scuola."; Nino Sammartano, 'Il Fascismo e la scuola', *Critica fascista*, 5, no. 22 (1927), 425-26.

connection between the Risorgimento's origins and the Savoy', 'Catholicism as a part of *Italianità*', 'Italy's civilising mission', 'Heroism with the cult of spiritual forefathers of Fascism', and 'incomplete Risorgimento and the myth of Fascism's birth'. All of these are woven together in the textbook narrative in order to argue that Fascism is the heir of *Italianità* and the ultimate ideology for the Italian nation. Without doubt, some of these ideas are not Fascist inventions. For instance, the spiritual lineage between *Romanità* and *Italianità* and the rhetoric of 'Two Italies', which are the core ideas in the debate on Fascism's historical continuity-discontinuity, were already much discussed by many intellectuals in Liberal Italy. Also 'Catholicism as a part of *Italianità*' and 'Italy's civilising mission' were the ideas which were initially conceived and argued in the Risorgimento by neo-Guelphs (the former) or many patriots like Mazzini (the latter). Nevertheless, the real peculiarity and appealing power of Fascist narrative historiography is its heterogeneity; diverse existing –therefore familiar to the literate masses– ideas, languages, topics, symbolism, metaphor, and tropes of historical interpretations in Italian literary culture are fused together into the narration. In this narrative, the nation's past is described as the continuous ebb and flow of *Italianità* which finally ends with the arrival of Fascism, the completer of *Italianità*, who will bring a utopian future to Italy.

Indeed, the hybrid nature is even more evident in Fascism's historical discourse of nationhood which is well reflected in *Libro unico*'s narrative as demonstrated in Chapter IV. In the discourse of nationhood, progressive or democratic liberal nationalism tends to highlight civic components of the nation, whilst more conservative tendency of nationalism seeks the national identity in the ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage of the nation. Fascist history writings encompass these two concepts of nationality. Historiography in the Fascist textbook largely defined the national identity with Italian language, culture and idealised models of the national character which is typical in the ethno-cultural nationalist discourse. On the other hand, the *Libro unico*'s history also contains some elements of the civic nationalist discourse which are emphasis on certain civic values (liberty, independence, love of *Patria*, order and unity), attention to the civic institutions (the monarchy, the state, the regime and the Church) and the philosophical premise of a nation as the creation of human will.

The Fascist textbook's discourse of nationality exposes its intricate ideological nature as well. Although it shares many thematic concerns and concepts with liberal (whether democratic or conservative) nationalism, Fascism's discourse of nationhood in the schoolbook, unlike liberalism, does not evolve into a discussion of citizenship in a democratic society. Equally, Fascism in a way both resembles and is different to the more extreme totalitarian ideology of Nazism.

Fascism and Nazism both identify similar virtues with their national characters. In addition, they claimed their nation's cultural spiritual superiority and right for territorial expansion with this conviction. Yet unlike its Nazi counterpart, biological determinism, physical stereotypes of nations, obsession with racial purity, and explicit Anti-Semitism are absent in the Fascist history manual.

Despite many similarities and confluences, however, Fascist historiography in the schoolbook also encompasses the impact of Fascism's own bid to redefine nationality and national identity. Imbuing Fascist moral values and world view, the regime intended to militarise the nation and sought to secure its legitimacy. Sacrificial heroism with the cult of death and the Duce, and the idea of permanent struggle between nations, are the marks that Fascism left on the history textbook.

Fascism wanted to differentiate itself from legacies of Liberal Italy but could not practically ignore all of them. Nothing is more conspicuous than its use of history in this regard. With history education, Fascism attempted to establish a new national identity in order to make Italy's future different. Yet the regime had to compromise rather than discard all liberal traditions in the historical discourse. As the *Libro unico di Stato* has shown, what Fascism did in the use of history was to manipulate, modify, and distort existing means and customs of history writing, by adding some Fascist elements, in accordance with the political, social and ideological exigencies of the regime.

In fact, the discourse of nationhood or national identity is just one example to show that Fascism's presentation of history is a complex combination of various inherited discursive practices with Fascist ideas, adaptations and motivations. More precisely speaking, the whole Fascist historiography in the *Libro unico* is constructed largely in the same way.

The Fascist textbook described many aspects of Italian history as the essence of *Italianità*: the Roman Empire and its achievements, the Catholic Church as the saviour of human civilisation, the greatness of medieval Italian communes, scientific, economic, and cultural glories in the Renaissance, Italian people's adventurousness, military virtues, love of *Patria*, independent spirit, heroic sacrifice and so on. Fascism, according to the book, succeeded in claiming all of these as its ideological and spiritual core. As Chapter V has displayed, the way in which the *Libro unico's* history claimed such inheritance for Fascism was to select, exclude, emphasise, revise, and sometimes even fabricate already well-told historical episodes, figures, and periods in line with its own interpretations of the past (Italy's destiny to be the Empire of the civiliser, dichotomies of 'Two Italies', historical continuity-discontinuity of Fascism, the cult of heroes, and

utopianism). The textbook narrative has given us examples like: the parallel emphases on the anarchy in Republican Rome and post-war Italy, arbitrary periodisations of the Renaissance and the Risorgimento, negligence of some topics (the racial integration/segregation in the late Roman Empire or the early Middle Ages, Reformation-Counter Reformation, the Papal state's misgovernment and the entire democratic parliamentary governments in Liberal Italy), and the cult of the selective images of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour and the Savoy kings.

This thesis has investigated Mussolini regime's Fascistisation project in education through the medium of historiography in the state school textbook. As existing studies on Fascist education have demonstrated, Fascism aimed to create a different vision for Italy's future and it was willing to reshuffle the Italian public school system, control the curriculum and syllabus in the classroom, impose new regulations, set up the youth organisation as a parallel educational institution, and bring a militaristic-masculine culture into the school in order to mould the new Italians.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of the *Libro unico di Stato*, as this thesis has proved, was an important part of this attempt to *la bonifica umana*. The Fascist regime wanted to establish a new national identity so that it abolished the liberal stance of laissez-faire in the textbook publishing and nationalised the textbook for primary schools.

However, Fascism's desire to change did not always result in a completely new policy, practice, and way of life. On the contrary, the reality in Fascist Italy was often formed with compromises, improvisations, practical combinations, and uneasy parallels between existing customs and the new Fascist impositions.<sup>4</sup> Other studies on Fascist education concur in this point: for students, teachers, administrators, and educational officials, life at schools under the Fascist dictatorship was ruled by the complex web of the existing customary practices and the new elements (moral values, ideology, behaviours, curriculums, after-school activities, political directives etc.) brought in by Fascism because the regime was unable or sometimes unwilling to start from scratch and find its own way on every issue of education.<sup>5</sup> This dissertation has uncovered that the same was true in the contents of history education taught in Fascist schools: historiography in the *Libro unico* was a product of Fascism's peculiar interpretations of the past conflated with the languages, topics, metaphor, allegories, and messages that liberal or nationalist politics and culture had for long developed in the use of history, including in education.

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<sup>3</sup> Charnitzky, *Fascismo e Scuola*; Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*; Michel Ostenc, *La scuola Italiana durante il fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1981)

<sup>4</sup> Ferris, *Everyday Life in Fascist*.

<sup>5</sup> Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, pp. 402-15; G. Genovesi; Minio-Paluello, *Education in Fascist*.

This thesis is not only about education and school books. In a broad sense, it is also a case study of Fascism's historical narrative within Italian literary culture. Since the end of the Cold War, scholarship on Italian Fascism has concentrated on the study of culture in the *Ventennio*. Much research consequently has illustrated us the complex reality of Fascist culture in its origins, aesthetic philosophy, political messages, motivations, stylistic tendencies, artistic forms, politics of patronage and sponsorship, producer-consumer relationship, and governmental policy. Some of these studies have also helped to reveal that Fascism's use of history was, as a part of culture, complicated as well. It was not only a tool of the regime's propaganda but also an intricate combination of diverse motivations, existing ideas, well-established symbolism, individual and governmental initiatives, conservative messages, and radically new styles and concepts.<sup>6</sup> However, these previous studies were limited to examining largely visual culture like rituals, monuments, exhibitions, paintings, architecture and cinema. Studies entirely devoted to analysing Fascist presentations of history in literary culture are still rare. This thesis has attempted to fill this gap. Through close reading of the *Libro unico*'s historiography, this dissertation has confirmed that Fascism's presentation of history in literary culture also reflected not only the Fascist idiosyncratic view of the past but also various political ideas, widely used rhetoric, metaphor and languages, common themes, manipulations for propaganda, ideological convictions, serious academic debates, and legacies of the Risorgimento's and Liberal Italy's historiographies.

In fact, this eclectic nature of Fascism's historical discourse was not a drawback but one of the main sources of its intellectual appeal.<sup>7</sup> In her study of Fascist visual culture, Marla Stone argues that Fascism "saw it as unnecessary, for the better part of the dictatorship, to isolate and restrict groups and behaviours that seemed not to threaten the basic work of the dictatorship" and permitted stylistic pluralism in art which made "a range of artists and aesthetics willing to answer the regime's call."<sup>8</sup> The same could be said of history writing and the study of history during the *Ventennio*. Many ideas, arguments, images, and perceptions in the pre-existing

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<sup>6</sup> *Donatello among the Blackshirts: History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy*, eds. by Roger J. Crum and Claudia Lazzaro (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*; Stone, *The Patron State*; Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*; Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*.

<sup>7</sup> Caludio Pavone, *Alle origini della Repubblica: scritti su fascismo, antifascismo e continuità dello stato* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995), pp. 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> Stone, *The Patron State*, p. 256.



tradition of history writing embraced by Fascism made its historical interpretation seem less irrational and somewhat plausible. Therefore, it was not so difficult to see that some non Fascist historians and intellectuals, like Arnaldo Momigliano, Ernesto Sestan, and Walter Maturi, were allowed to work on the regime's projects if they were not overtly antifascist and continued their profession in Italy until the racial law was enacted in the late 1930s.<sup>9</sup> Demonstrating the heterogeneous composition of the *Libro unico*'s history account, this thesis argued that we could assume that such an appeal of eclecticism in the Fascist historiography resided in the school textbook as well.

Recognising the appealing elements in Fascist culture, many scholars conclude that Fascism's use of history is one of the most enduring legacies which the dictatorship left to today's Italian culture.<sup>10</sup> In the Republican era, many aesthetic styles, artistic movements, academic institutions and individual intellectuals which closely collaborated with Mussolini's regime, survived and even thrived with only the removal of the most apparent signs of Fascism (praises to the Duce, explicit racism, quotations from Mussolini, Fascist symbols and mottos etc). So, we can still see lots of ideas, arguments, topics, and methods of presentation, which were proposed, discussed, and utilised during the *Ventennio*, in Italian discourses of history today. Equally, I would argue, Fascist history education for the purpose of *la bonifica umana* left a significant mark on the conception and discourse of the nationhood and national identity in contemporary Italy. Most historical events and figures that the *Libro unico* canonised as incarnations of *Italinaità* are still regarded in the same way in many public and private discussions of history. More importantly, it is not difficult to see that some rhetorical devices used widely in Fascist narrative historiographies, including the school textbook, reappear in many contemporary Italian discussions of the nation and (personal and national) identities. The rhetoric of sacrifice-rebirth-new men and the Two Italies rhetoric are two examples that we may frequently encounter today.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Margherita Angelini, 'Clio among the Camicie Nere: Italian Historians and Their Allegiances to Fascism (1930s-1940s)', in *In the Society of Fascists: Acclamation, Acquiescence, and Agency in Mussolini's Italy*, eds. by Giulia Albanese and Roberta Pergher (New York: Palgravemacmillan, 2012), pp. 211-31.

<sup>10</sup> Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, pp. 151-56; Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, pp. 210-11; Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected*, pp. 258-67.

<sup>11</sup> For the literary use of the rhetoric of sacrifice-rebirth-new men in the post-Fascist era, refer to Ferrari, *The Rhetoric of Violence*. One of the well-known recent adaptations of the Two Italies rhetoric is this controversial book and documentary film created by Emmott and Piras: see Bill Emmott, *Good Italy, bad*

Yet, to acknowledge the existence of appealing elements and of Fascism's legacy is by no means to say that the *Libro unico*'s historiography was successful enough to imbue children with the Fascist worldview. In other words, further study is required to gauge the children's reception of Fascist historiography: to what extent did the students in Fascist schools absorb what they were taught in history class? Which messages, lessons and moral-ideological values in the textbook were accepted or rejected by the pupils and why? What was the teachers and students' general opinion about the quality and the contents of the *Libro unico*'s history? Did they see a substantial difference in the historiography between the State textbook and its predecessors, or not? To answer these questions, we need to examine a broader range of materials beyond the *Libro unico di Stato* such as students' and teachers' diaries or memoirs, student's essay compositions on historical topics, readers' reviews or opinions on epic novels, films, cartoons and historical events contributed to children's papers or magazines, and teachers' discussion on history teaching in their journals etc.

This thesis does not signal the end of the study of history textbooks in Fascist Italy. Apart from the *Libro unico di Stato*, there were other textbooks widely used by schools or other educational institutions under the dictatorship: textbooks for higher education (*licei*, and vocational schools), books for the *corso di Cultura fascista* (the Fascist culture course), a lesson for the final-year students at primary schools or pupils at junior high schools and various types of middle schools, subsidiary textbooks for political education such as *L'Impero italiano dell'Africa orientale* (The Italian Empire in Eastern Africa), the Fascist youth organisation's manuals, textbooks for teachers' colleges and so on. Of course, history was a core subject in these books and further research on them needs to be conducted in order to better understand history education and appropriation of history for *la bonifica umana* under Fascism.

The politics of identity and building a new national identity for unified Italy has always been a troublesome issue in the country's hundred and fifty year history. The Kingdom of Italy, the Fascist regime, and the Republic, all defined the nationhood differently and tried to establish their own visions as the ultimate national identity. History education was commonly used as an important tool for this effort by them as this dissertation has illustrated in the case of the *Libro unico di Stato*. Nevertheless, as in the Fascist case, no regime or ideology in unified Italy

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*Italy: why Italy must conquer its demons to face the future* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013); originally published as *Forza Italia: come ripartire dopo Berlusconi*, trans. by Chicca Galli (Milan: Rizzoli, 2010) and *Girlfriend in a Coma*, dir. by Annalisa Piras, writ. by Bill Emmott and Annalisa Piras (Springshot Productions, 2012).

succeeded in identifying itself with the nation. Rather, all quests to fashion a national identity since the Unification or the Risorgimento have resulted in an intricate perception of nationhood in contemporary Italy where modern-day Italians appear to have an ambivalent emotional, rational and psychological reception of their Italianness. Perhaps, it is hard to see any better expression of this today than Giorgio Gaber's song, *Io non mi sento Italiano* (I don't feel myself an Italian):

"[...] Excuse me, Mr. President/ If it's impolite/ to say that I don't feel/ any sense of belonging  
And apart from Garibaldi/ and some other glorious heroes  
I don't see any reason/ to be proud [of being an Italian]  
Excuse me, Mr. President/ but I'm thinking of the fanaticism/ of the Blackshirts/ during Fascism  
From which one fine day/ this democracy was born/ so to congratulate it/ would take a lot of imagination  
I don't feel Italian/ but fortunately or unfortunately I am. [...]"<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "[...] Mi scusi Presidente/ se arrivo all'impudenza/ di dire che non sento/ alcuna appartenenza/ E tranne Garibaldi/ e altri eroi gloriosi/ non vedo alcun motivo/ per essere orgogliosi/ Mi scusi Presidente/ ma ho in mente il fanatismo/ delle camicie nere/ al tempo del Fascismo/ Da qui un bel giorno nacque/ questa democrazia/ che a farle i complimenti/ ci vuole fantasia/ Io non mi sento Italiano/ ma per fortuna o purtroppo lo sono. [...]" ; Giorgio Gaber, *Io non mi sento italiano*, written by Giorgio Gaber and Sandro Luporini, sung and played by Giorgio Gaber and Beppe Quirici (CGD East West, 5050466158, 2003). Or to listen online, go to <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aWYkwV-pn0>> [accessed 5 Aug 2015].

# Appendix 1

## List of the *Libro unico*

### **1st edition**

Dina Bucciarelli-Belardinelli, *Il libro della prima classe* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1930) [Pio Pullini]

Dina Bucciarelli-Belardinelli, *Il libro della seconda classe* (1930) [Pio Pullini]

Quercia Tanzarella, *Il libro della seconda classe* (1930) [Mario Pompei]

Alessandro Marcucci, *Il libro della seconda classe: scuole rurali* (1930) [Duilio Cambellotti]

Grazia Deledda and others, *Il libro della terza classe elementare: letture, religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (1930) [Pio Pullini]

Angiolo Silvio Novaro, *Il libro della quarta classe elementare: letture* (1930) [Bruno Bramanti]

Roberto Forges Davanzati, *Il balilla Vittorio. Il libro della quinta classe elementare: letture* (1930)

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (1930)

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (1930)

### **2nd edition**

Maria Zanetti, *Libro della prima classe* (1935) [Enrico Pinochi]

Alfredo Petrucci, *L'Italiano nuovo. Letture per la II classe elementare* (1936) [Piero Bernardini]

Nazareno Padellaro, *Il libro della terza classe elementare: letture* (1935) [Carlo Testi]

Francesco Saporì, *Il libro della quinta classe: testo di letture per le alunne. Amor di patria* (1936) [Carlo Testi]

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro terza classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica* (1935) [Carlo Testi]

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (1935) [Carlo Testi]

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro della IV classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia* (1937)

Maria Mascalchi, *Il libro della IV classe elementare: aritmetica, scienze* (1937)

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia, aritmetica, scienze* (1935) [Carlo Testi]

Angelo Zammarchi and others, *Il libro della V classe elementare: religione, storia, geografia* (1937)

Maria Mascalchi, *Il libro della V classe elementare: aritmetica, scienze* (1937)

Luigi Filippo De Magistris, *L'impero italiano dell'Africa orientale* (1937)

### **Last edition**

Vera Cottarelli Gaiba and Nerina Oddi, *Il libro della prima classe* (1940) [Roberto Sgrilli]

Pina Ballario, *Quartiere Corridoni: letture per la seconda classe dei centri urbani* (1941) [Bruno Angoletta]

Eros Belloni, *Il libro per la seconda classe dei centri rurali* (1941) [Piero Bernardini]

Alfredo Petrucci, *L'aratro e la spada: letture per la terza classe dei centri rurali* (1939) [Pio Pullini]

Adele Zanetti and Maria Zanetti, *Patria: letture per la terza classe dei centri urbani* (1939) [Mario Pompei]

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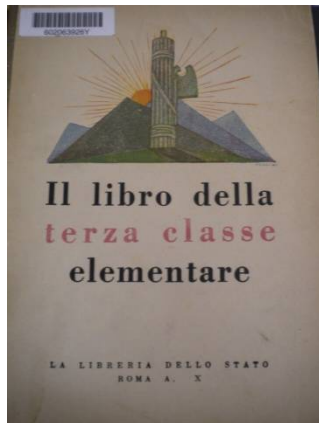
\* The number in ( ) is the first publication year

\* [ ] is the illustrator's name

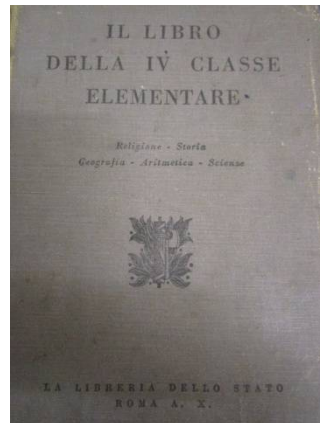
\* The official (not real) place of publication and publisher is in common in all books: Rome / *Libreria dello Stato*

# Appendix 2

## Different Editions of *Sussidiari* cover pages



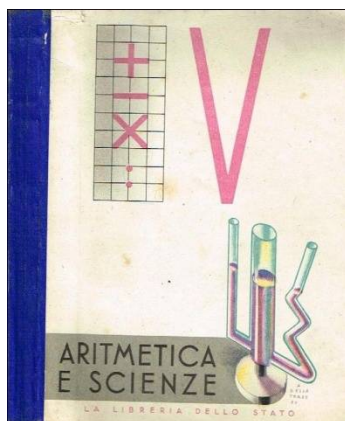
3<sup>rd</sup> grade (1932)



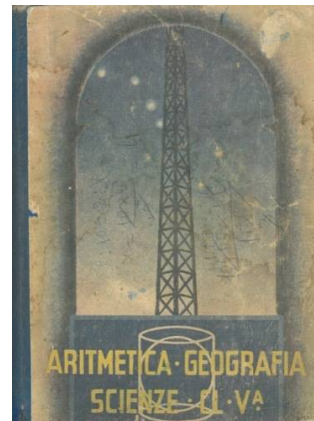
4<sup>th</sup> grade (1932)



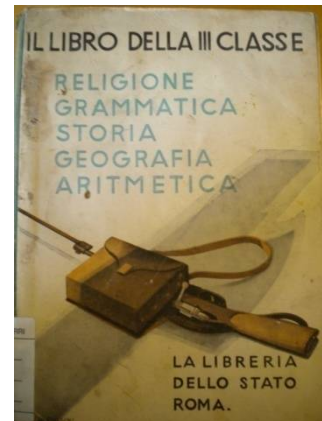
3<sup>rd</sup> grade (1937)



5<sup>th</sup> grade (1939)



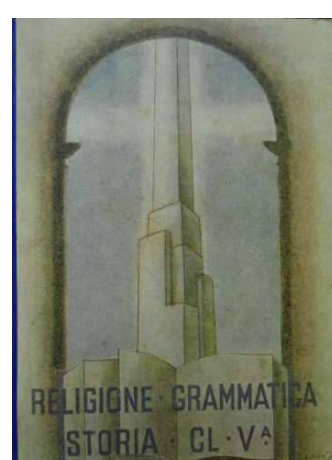
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3<sup>rd</sup> grade (1941)



4<sup>th</sup> grade (1941)



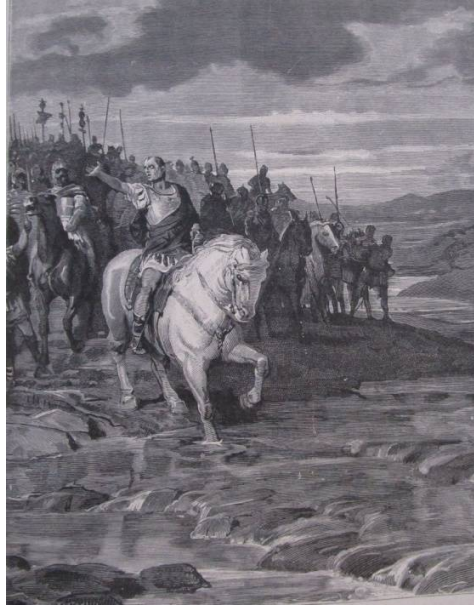
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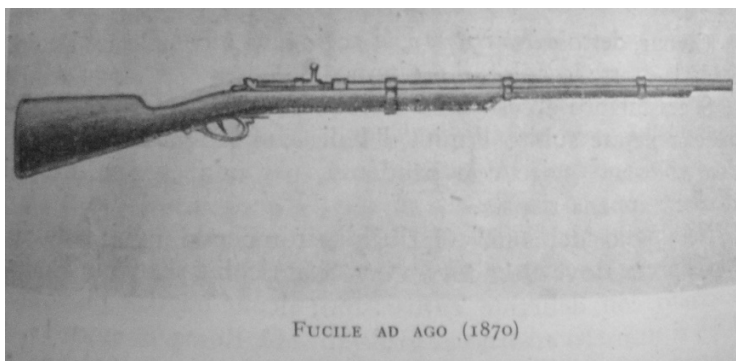
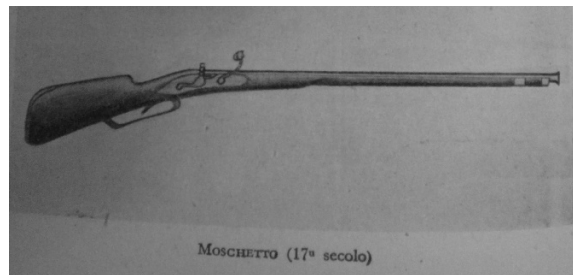
## Appendix 3



Mussolini's portrait in the *Libro unico*



Caesar crossing the Rubicon



Some illustrations of firearms in the *Libro unico*

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